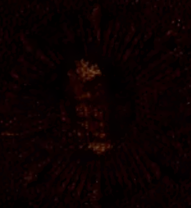

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EDWARD PAYSON, D.D.

A
MEMOIR
OF THE
REV. EDWARD PAYSON, D.D

LATE OF PORTLAND, MAINE.

BY REV. ASA CUMMINGS

Bene orasse est bene studuisse .... LUTHER.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY
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In this edition, whatever was judged to be of mere local interest, and a portion of the comments which had been largely interspersed, are omitted, under the sanction of the author. The exhibition of Dr. Payson's life and character, especially as shown in his own journal and correspondence, is full; and every thing retained which was supposed to be of general interest to the intelligent and pious reader.

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DISTRICT OF MAINE, TO WIT:

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-fifth day of February, A. D 1830, and in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, MRS. ANN L. PAYSON, of said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof she claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"A Memoir of the Rev. Edward Payson, D. D. late Pastor of the Second Church in Portland. Bene orasse est bene studuisse.—*Luther.*"

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books, to the authors and prorietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an act, entitled, "An Act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;' and for extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

J. MUSSEY,
Clerk of the District of Maine.

A true copy as of record,
Attest, J. MUSSEY, *Clerk D. C. Maine.*

Right of publishing transferred to American Tract Society

CONTENTS.

Page

CHAP. I. Birth of Edward Payson—His early impressions; intellectual qualities; filial and fraternal conduct; moral character—His literary education; enters Harvard College; his reputation there 5

CHAP. II. Comprising a period of three years from the time of his leaving college 14

CHAP. III. His religious history during the period embraced in the preceding chapter 29

CHAP. IV. Retires to Rindge, and devotes himself exclusively to his preparation for the ministry 66

CHAP. V. His state of mind in the immediate prospect of the ministry 93

CHAP. VI. His first efforts as a preacher—His religious character further developed 108

CHAP. VII. Visits Portland—His favorable reception, and Ordination 125

CHAP. VIII. His concern for his flock—Reverse in his temporal prospects—Is taken from his work by sickness 140

CHAP. IX. Resumes his pastoral labors—Letters—Review of the year 156

CHAP. X. His dependence on God; its influence on himself and church—His uniform purpose to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified—Illustration—Letters—Resolutions—Increased success 176

CHAP. XI. Permanency and strength of maternal influence—Correspondence—Death-bed anguish, how alleviated—Disgraceful incident—Price of popularity—Reasons of former trials developed—Letters, &c. 198

CHAP. XII. Holy aspirations—Gratitude to the Savior—Multiplied labors—Novel family scene—Danger

Page.
averted—" Curious frame"—Flattery deprecated—His marriage—Becomes sole pastor of the church—Retrospect of the year 216

CHAP. XIII. Forms of prayer—Thoughts on public prayer—His sincerity a grand means of his success 240

CHAP. XIV. The pastor in action—Methods of exciting, sustaining and extending a due interest in religious concerns—Preaching, administration of ordinances, church fast, conference, inquiry meetings 254

CHAP. XV. The same subject—Bible class—Pastoral visits—Social parties—Special and casual interviews—Charm of his conversation—Singular rencounter—Whence his competency—His publications 295

CHAP. XVI. His exertions without the bounds of his parish—Influence on his ministerial associates; in resuscitating and edifying other churches—Visits " The Springs"—Effect of his example, conversation, and prayers on other visiters—Excursions in behalf of charitable societies—Translation of ministers—He is invited to Boston and New-York 317

CHAP. XVII. Letters to persons in various circumstances and states of mind 339

CHAP. XVIII. His private character—His affections and demeanor as a husband, father, master, friend—His gratitude, economy, generosity—His temper of mind under injuries 377

CHAP. XIX. Further particulars relating to his personal history, and religious exercises, in connection with his pastoral labors and their results 398

CHAP. XX. His last labors—His spiritual joys, heavenly counsels, and brightening intellect, during the progress of his disease—His triumphant death 445

Lines by Mrs. Sigourney 485

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

Birth of Edward Payson—His early impressions; intellectual qualities; filial and fraternal conduct; moral character—His literary education: enters Harvard College; his reputation there.

Edward Payson was born at Rindge, New-Hampshire, July 25th, 1783. His father was the Rev. Seth Payson, D. D. pastor of the church in Rindge, a man of piety and public spirit, distinguished as a clergyman, and favorably known as an author. His mother, Grata Payson, was a distant relative of her husband, their lineage, after being traced back a few generations, meeting in the same stock. To the Christian fidelity of these parents there is the fullest testimony in the subsequent and repeated acknowledgments of their son, who habitually attributed his religious hopes, as well as his usefulness in life, under God, to their instructions, example, and prayers—especially those of his mother. She appears to have admitted him to the most intimate, unreserved, and confiding intercourse, which was yet so wisely conducted as to strengthen rather than diminish his filial reverence; to have cherished a remarkable inquisitiveness of mind, which early discovered itself in him; and to have patiently heard and replied to the almost endless inquiries which his early thirst for knowledge led him to propose. His father was not less really and sincerely interested for the welfare of his son; but, from the nature of the relation, and the calls of official duty, his opportunities must have been less frequent, and his instructions have partaken of a more formal character. With the mother, however, opportunities were always occurring, and she seems to have been blessed with the faculty and disposition to turn them to the best advantage. Edward's recollections of her extended back to very early childhood; and he has been heard to say, that though she was very solicitous that he might be liberally educated, and receive every accomplishment which would increase his respectability and influence in the world, yet he could distinctly see that the supreme, the all absorbing concern of her soul respecting him, was, that he might become a child of God. This manifested itself in her discipline, her counsels, expostulations, and prayers, which were followed up with a perseverance that nothing could check. And they were not in vain. From the first developement of his moral powers, his mind was more or less affected by his condition and prospects as a sinner. It is among the accredited traditions of his family, that he was often known to weep under the preaching of the Gospel, when only three years old. About this period, too, he would frequently call his mother to his bed-side to converse on religion, and to answer numerous questions respecting his relations to God and the future world. How long this seriousness continued, or to what interruptions it was subjected, does not clearly appear; nor is much known as to the peculiar character of his exercises at that time; but that they were not mere transient impressions seems highly probable from the fact, that, in subsequent years, his mother was inclined to the belief that he was converted in childhood. There was some other cause than maternal partiality for this opinion as she did not cherish it alone. Besides, his intimate friends have reason for believing that he never neglected secret prayer while a resident in his father's family. The evidences of his piety, however, were, at this period, far from being conclusive; he, at least, does not appear to have regarded them as such; neither were they so regarded by his father, who had earnestly desired to see him a decided follower of the Redeemer, before encountering the dangers to religious principle and pure morals, which are sometimes found within the walls of a college.

How far those mental qualities, which distinguished Dr. Payson's maturity, were apparent in his early days, cannot now be known; for, though he died comparatively young, his parents had gone before him, and their surviving children were all younger than this son. The very few incidents belonging to this period of his history, which have escaped oblivion, though not adequate to satisfy curiosity, are, on the whole, characteristic, and afford undoubted indications that this well-known decision, enterprise, and perseverance had dawned even in childhood.

That he was a minute observer of nature, and highly susceptible of emotions from the grand and beautiful in the handy-works of God, was obvious to all who had the privilege of listening to his conversation or his preaching. His taste for the sublime very early discovered itself. During a tempest, he might be seen exposed on the top of the fence, or some other eminence, while the lightnings played and the thunders rolled around him, sitting in delightful composure, and enjoying the sublimity of the scene.

He is said to have manifested an early predilection for arithmetic; and was a tolerable proficient in the art of reading at the age of four years—an art which no man ever employed to better advantage. The surprising quickness with which he would transfer to his own mind the contents of a book, at a time when a new book was a greater rarity than it now is, threatened to exhaust his sources of information through this medium. All the books in his father's collection, and the town library, which were of a character suited to his age and attainments, were read before he left the paternal home, and retained with such tenacity of memory, as to be ever after available for illustrating truths, or enlivening and embellishing discourse.

It is natural to inquire whether there was any thing in the circumstances of his early youth which will account for his mental habits, and especially the rapidity of his intellectual operations. A partial answer may be found in the fact, that his time was divided between labor and study. His father, like most ministers of country congregations, derived the means of supporting his family, in part, from a farm, which his sons assisted in cultivating. From his share in these agricultural labors the subject of this Memoir was not exempted. But, whatever were his employment, though he appears to have engaged in it with cheerfulness, and to have prosecuted it with fidelity, his thirst for knowledge was the ruling passion of his soul. This he sought to quench, or rather to cherish, by resorting to his book at every interval from toil, however short, when he tasked his mind to the utmost of his power, intent on making the greatest possible acquisition in a given time. His mind, though strung up to the highest pitch of exertion at these seasons, suffered no injury thereby, as it was soon diverted from its employment by a call to the field; and every repetition of the process extended its capability and power. The acquisitions, in this way obtained, furnished materials on which to employ his thoughts while engaged in manual labor, which he would not fail to digest and lay up in store for future use,—a voluntary discipline of most auspicious influence, as it respects the facility of acquiring knowledge, and the power of retaining it.

His early literary, as well as moral and religious education, is believed to have been conducted principally by his parents, except the studies preparatory to college, which were pursued, in part at least, at a neighboring academy. His preparatory course was completed before the long and fondly-cherished desires of his father respecting his personal piety were realized. Still the good man could hardly cherish the thought of conferring on his son the advantages of a public education, without an assurance grounded on evidences of experimental religion, that he would employ his attainments for the best good of his fellow-men, and the glory of his Maker. With reference to this essential requisite, he used much earnest expostulation, and even went so far as to say to him, "To give you a liberal education, while destitute of religion, would be like putting a sword into the hands of a madman."

Whether the father was led to adopt such strong language, from having observed in his son the existence of those properties which, in their future develepement, were to give him such power over his species, or whether it proceeded merely from anxiety to transfer his own feelings and convictions to the mind of his son,—there does not appear to have been, in either the disposition or conduct of the latter, any particular cause for unusual apprehensions respecting him. His filial affection and conduct had been, and ever continued to be, most exemplary, as manifested by his letters when absent, and by his reverence for his parents and cheerful obedience when at home. His fraternal feelings were kind, and his conduct towards his brothers and sisters faithful and affectionate. By them he was greatly beloved, and his vacations, when he should visit home, and mingle again in the domestic circle, were anticipated with delightful interest, as the halcyon days of their lives. His moral character comes down to us, even from the first, without a blemish; and, by consent of all, he sustained the reputation of a magnanimous, honorable, generous youth.

His father, as is obvious from the event, had formed no peremptory and unalterable purpose to wait for the certain fruits of personal religion before sending him to college; and the real cause of hesitancy was, probably, the tender age and inexperience of his son. The interval of his detention was a favorable season for the application of religious motives. As such it was improved by this solicitous parent, and not in vain; for his faithful suggestions and appeals were afterwards recalled by the object of his solicitude, with most grateful and impressive interest. Young Payson though de tained from college, was permitted to pursue his studies—but whether exclusively, or in connection with other employments, does not appear,—till he was fitted to join the Sophomore class; when, all objections being waived, he entered Harvard College, at an advanced standing, in 1800, about the time he completed his seventeenth year.

He had now a new ordeal to pass—a severe test for both his talents and character. Many a youth, who was regarded as a prodigy of genius in the place of his nativity, and who anticipated the same eminence at the seat of science, has found himself sadly disappointed, in being obliged to take his rank below mediocrity. Thus it had nearly fared with Payson—not that he was destitute of real worth; but there were circumstances which prevented that worth from being appreciated. The first impressions respecting him were unfavorable. "You would have taken him, says a classmate, for an unpolished, ignorant country lad; exceedingly modest, unassuming, and reserved in his manners. And, as we generally look for a long time at the words and actions of a character through the same medium by which he was first presented to us, his merit was for a long time unknown." This judging from appearances is, perhaps, unavoidable, though often very injurious. In his youth, Mr. Payson's modesty might easily be mistaken for bashfulness; as through life he had much of a downcast look, holding his eyes inclined to the earth, except when warmly engaged in conversation; then they would beam most expressively; and when addressing an audience from the pulpit, they would "pry through the portals of the head," and give a thrilling emphasis to the language of his lips.

Mr. Payson's classmate, just quoted, and who also occupied the same rooms with him during the whole period of his residence at college, bears decided testimony to the purity of his morals and the regularity of his habits, as well as other estimable qualities. With his intimate friends he was social, communicative, and peculiarly interesting and improving, and, by those who best knew him, was much beloved. He was distinguished for his industry; his first care always was to be master of the studies of his class, which engaged him but a short time, and then he would resume his reading. He was invariably prepared to meet his instructor, prompt in reciting, and seldom committed a mistake. His manner of rehearsing was rapid, his tone of voice low, with a kind of instinctive shrinking from every thing which had the appearance of display. He seems to have been regarded as no more than a *decent* scholar by his associates and teachers generally at college; but, "after having been with him a few months, I was convinced that he possessed uncommon mental powers. Others knew not *this*, because they knew not the man. During the latter part of his collegiate course, as he became more known, he rose rapidly in the estimation of both the government and his classmates, as a young man of correct morals, amiable disposition, and respectable talents."

The testimony of another classmate agrees with this as to the general character of the man, but is more discriminating and positive in reference to his merits as a scholar. "The circumstance of joining his class at an advanced standing, combined with his naturally retiring and unobtrusive manners, contributed, probably to his being so little known to a large portion of his college contemporaries, who seemed scarcely aware that his talents were of that high order, by which he was soon afterwards so eminently distinguished. Yet even at that early period, he manifested an energy, hardihood, and perseverance of character, which were sure indications of success, in whatever course he might eventually direct his professional pursuits. In the regular course of college studies, pursued at the time of his residence at Cambridge, he maintained the reputation of a respectable scholar in every branch. Intellectual and moral philosophy were more to his taste than physical science; yet he sustained a distinguished rank in the higher branches of the mathematics, as well as natural philosophy and astronomy, at that time so unpopular, and so little understood by a large proportion of the students." It is not remembered, however, that there was any public recognition of distinguished merit in him at the time he commenced Bachelor of Arts.

The reputation of being "a great reader," as the phrase is often applied, is a very undesirable distinction; it is one, however, which Mr. Payson bore in common with thousands who are not the wiser for their reading. His frequent resort to the college library was a theme of raillery with his fellow-students, who, at one time, represented him as having 'a machine to turn over the leaves;' and at another, as 'having left off taking out books, because he had read all the thousands in the alcoves of old Harvard.' Ridicule, in his case, was egregiously misapplied; for, says his constant companion in the study and in the dormitory, "every thing he read, he made his own. He had the strongest and most tenacious memory I ever knew.

It is truly astonishing with what rapidity he could read, how soon he could devour a large volume, and yet give the most particular and accurate account of its contents." Testimonies of the same kind might be multiplied, and confirmed by many anecdotes, which to a stranger would appear incredible, illustrating the power of this faculty, and the severity of those tests to which it was subjected.

CHAPTER II.

Comprising a period of three years from the time of his leaving college.

Mr. Payson was graduated at Harvard University, at the commencement in 1803. Soon after leaving college, he was, on recommendation, particularly of Professors Tappan and Pearson, engaged to take charge of the academy then recently established in Portland. He continued in this office for three years, at the close of which he was, by the terms of his contract, at liberty to resign it. Of this liberty his new views of duty, at the time, disposed him to avail himself.

An employment, which requires the daily repetition of nearly the same routine of duties, cannot be very prolific in incident, or very favorable to the developement of those qualities which attract the public eye. Nor is it an employment in which real worth is likely to be appreciated, except by a very few; though the subject of this memoir is not thought to have had any special cause of complaint, as to the estimation in which his services were held. He acquired and sustained a good reputation as an instructer; but, from a man possessing his characteristics, something more would naturally be expected. He was certainly endued with a rare faculty for communicating knowledge, and with a power to awaken, and call into action, the mental energies of either youth or manhood. In the existing methods of education, however, there was much to obstruct the exercise of this power. The instructer, who should do much more than follow the order and manner of the text-books then in use, would probably have been regarded as an empiric; besides, the habits of society were then opposed, more than they have been since, to every thing which bore the appearance of innovation. His native diffidence, also, would have operated as a powerful restraint against venturing on any bold experiments in a sphere of action and duty in which, judging from the character and attainments of many who had filled it, little improvement was to be expected.

At this period he was but a youth; and it is not to be supposed that he engaged in the business of instruction, and prosecuted it with that all-absorbing interest and determination of purpose which distinguished his ministerial career. It is, to say the least, extremely doubtful whether he had felt the influence on human exertion of that principle which is indispensable to man's highest achievements—*doing all to the glory of God.* As it was, he is remembered by surviving pupils with gratitude, respect, and even veneration. He has left, as will be seen, sufficient evidence of his deep solicitude for their moral and religious welfare, from the time at which he was comfortably assured of his own "acceptance in the Beloved."

It would seem, from some allusions in his sermons, as well as from hints derived from other sources, that, during the early part of his residence in Portland, he indulged himself in such amusements as were fashionable, or were considered reputable, and that, too, with a gust as exquisite as their most hearty devotee—how frequently, or to what extent, the writer is ignorant. This practice, if it were more than occasional, would indicate a relish for social pleasures, in the usual sense of the expression, which did not long continue; for, after his seriousness became habitual, he was averse to going into company, even to a fault. He dreaded an invitation to a social party, though he had reason to expect nothing there directly offensive to religious feelings. But there were companions whose society he sought, and whose intercourse was so regulated as to subserve mutual improvement. They were select literary friends, some of them his classmates, whose fellowship was in a high degree intimate and endearing. With these he passed many pleasant and profitable hours, and cemented a friendship which continued till death, and which has been faithfully reciprocated by the surviving members of the little band, and continues to exhibit itself in unfeigned respect for his precious memory. The exercises of these meetings were not subjected to any very rigid and formal regulations, such as would have cramped the energies of the mind, or restrained even its wilder sallies. Mutual confidence was the bond of union, which no severity of retort or piquancy of raillery could sunder. Each brought forward the results of his reading or invention, and exercised his powers at discussion or free conversation; and, by this "action of mind upon mind," the most brilliant flashes of wit were often struck from one so full charged, and so quick at combination as Payson's, to the no small entertainment of his companions. Of these intellectual banquets, his contributions were the most coveted and exquisite portion.

But no distance, employment, or friendships could weaken his attachment to the paternal home, or diminish the strength of his filial love. Some extracts from his letters will now be given, which, while they exhibit the son and the brother in the most amiable light, will serve also to illustrate some of his intellectual qualities. They are addressed to his "Ever Dear and Honored Parents."

"*Portland, May* 20, 1804.

"It is not the least among the distressing circumstances attending the late afflicting dispensation of Providence, that I am unable in person to share in your grief, and alleviate, by filial sympathy and affection, the keenness of your sorrow. I would fain attempt to afford you some consolation; but the only sources whence it can be derived are already your own. I can only say for myself—it shall ever be my endeavor, that, so far as my exertions can avail, you shall not feel his loss; and that we, who remain, will strive to fill, by our increased duty, reverence, and affection, the painful void thus made in your happiness."

"*January* 14, 1805.

"I congratulate you both on the welcome news, which my sister gave me, of your amended health and spirits. Mine, I feel, flow with double rapidity since I received her letter. I witness, in fancy, the happiness of home, and long to participate and increase it; but for the present must be content with rejoicing alone. I cannot possibly plead guilty to the charge of 'not thinking of home, so often as home does of me.' On the contrary, I believe home has very little due on that score, if we consider the frequency, and not the value, of the thoughts. But, my dear Parents, if a few of those thoughts could be imbodied on paper, and sent me, how much more good they would do, and how much more pleasure they would communicate, than if they were to remain in their native place!

"I am still without an assistant, and as the number of students has been increased, my task is very laborious. However, I shall soon be supplied.—Just now I was interrupted. It was my assistant. He is young and raw; but so much the better. He will not render me small by comparison!

"I had a pleasant vacation. All my classmates who are in the district, five in number, met at the house of one of them. The recollection of past scenes was, as Ossian says, 'pleasant and mournful to the soul.' There is, however, very little satisfaction in recalling past pleasures to mind; that is, what is generally called pleasure."

' *September* 8, 1805.

"The distress I felt at parting with you was soon banished by the garrulity of my companion, whose chattering tongue for once afforded me pleasure, and, besides, freed me from the necessity of talking, for which I felt not very well qualified. I once thought it was impossible for my filial affection to be increased; but the kindness which first gave birth to it increases every visit I make, and that must increase with it. Were others blessed with friends like mine, how much greater would be the sum of virtue and happiness on earth than we have reason to fear it is at present. Why cannot other parents learn your art of mixing *the friend* with the parent? of joining friendship to filial affection, and of conciliating love, without losing respect?—an art of more importance to society, and more difficult to learn,—at least, if we may judge by the rareness with which it is found,—than any other; and an art which you, my dear parents, certainly have in perfection.

"We had a tolerably pleasant journey, and were received with kindness by Mrs. ——, and with politeness, at least, by the rest of the family. After the others were retired, Col. —— kept me up till past eleven, explaining, as well as I could, the difference between the various sects of religion, especially between Arminians and Calvinists. * * * *

"We had a long passage, but met with no accident, except that I carried away my hat—to use a sea-phrase—that is, the wind carried it away, and, there being no one on board that would fit me, I was two days on the water exposed to a burning sun, without shelter; in consequence, my face was scorched pretty severely."

"*September* 20, 1805.

"I sadly suspect that this plan of numbering my epistles will prove your deficiency, and my attention, in a manner very honorable to myself, and not very much so to my good friends at home. This is my *fourth*, and not one have I received, nor do I expect one this long time. However, I say not this by way of complaint. Your kindness, when I was at home, proved your affection beyond a doubt; and if I should not receive one letter this year, I should have no right to complain. Yet, though not of right, I may of favor entreat for a few occasional tokens of remembrance I have as yet scarcely recovered from the inflation and pride your goodness occasioned. The attention I received led me to suppose myself a person of no small consequence; however, a month's dieting on cold civility and formal politeness will, I hope, reduce me to my former size. In the meantime, I am convinced that my situation here is not so much worse than any other as I imagined."

The following letter describes a scene in a stagecoach. Those who have witnessed the writer's unequalled command of language, and power to accumulate facts and imagery to give it effect, will most readily conceive of the overwhelming torrent of satire which he must have poured forth on the occasion described. Travelers have often brought themselves into a highly mortifying dilemma by allowing free license to their tongues among strangers. It was happy for the hero in this adventure, that he expended his forces upon a legitimate subject of raillery.

"*Portland*, *Oct.* 8, 1805.

'My dearest Father,

"In hopes of rescuing you one moment from the crowd of cares and occupations which surround you, I will give you an anecdote of my journey; and if you condescend to smile over it, why so much the better. When seated in a company of strange phizzes, I immediately set myself to decipher them, and assign a character and occupation to the owner of each. But in the stage which conveyed me to B*****, there was one which completely puzzled me. I could think of no employment that would fit it, except that of a ******* representative, unless it was that of *********, whose pride, being confined in B. by the pressure of wealth and talents, had now room to expand itself. A certain kind of consequential gravity and pompous solemnity, together with his dress, might perhaps have impressed us with respect, had not a pair of rough, callous hands, with crooked, dirty nails, lessened their effect. During a pause in the conversation, he presented me with a paper, which, on examination, I found to be one of those quack advertisements which Mr. **** has honored with his signature. Not suspecting in the least that the good gentleman had any concern in the business, and feeling a fine flow of words at hand, I began to entertain my fellow-travelers with its numerous beauties of expression, spelling, and grammar. Finding them very attentive, and encouraged by their applause, I next proceeded to utter a most violent philippic against quacks of all denominations, especially those who go about poisoning the ignorant with patent medicines. I could not help observing, however, that my eloquence, while it had a powerful effect on the muscles of the rest of my companions, seemed to be thrown away on this gentleman aforesaid. But, concluding that his gravity proceeded from a wish to keep up his dignity, I resolved to conquer it; and commenced a fresh attack, in which, addressing myself entirely to him, I poured forth all the ridicule and abuse which my own imagination could suggest, or memory could supply—but all in vain—the more animated and witty I was, the more doleful he looked, till, having talked myself out of breath, and finding the longitude of his face increase every moment, I desisted, very much mortified that my efforts were so unsuccessful. But, in the midst of my chagrin, the coach stopped, the gentleman alighted, and was welcomed. by a little squab wife into a shop, decorated with the letters, 'MEDICAL CORDIAL STORE.' I afterwards learnt he is the greatest quack-medicine seller in B. Excuse me, my dear father, for this long, dull story. I thought it would be shorter. I feel rather out of tune for embellishing to-day.

"We have lately been in a hubbub here about a theatre. After a great deal of dispute, the town voted, to the astonishment of all, that they would not, if they could help it, suffer the establishment of a theatre One man said, and said publicly, that he considered it as much a duty to carry his children to a play-house, as he did to carry them to meeting, and that they got more good by it. Among the arguments in favor, it was asserted, that, though bad plays were sometimes acted, bad sermons were likewise preached, and that the pulpit ought to be pulled down as much as the theatre Adieu, my dear father, and believe me your most affectionate son, EDWARD PAYSON."

"*October* 29, 1805.

"I must, my dear mother, give you some account of my comforts. In the first place, I have a very hand-some chamber, which commands a delightful view of the harbor and the town, with the adjacent country. This chamber is sacred; for even the master of the house does not enter it without express invitation. At sunrise a servant comes and lights up a fire, which soon induces me to rise, and I have nothing to do but sit down to study. When I come from school at night, I find a fire built, jack and slippers ready, a lamp as soon as it is dark, and fuel sufficient for the evening. An agreement with a neighboring bookseller furnishes me with books in plenty and variety. The objection to our meals is, they are too good, and consist of too great a variety. And what gives a zest to all, without which it would be insipid, is, that I can look round me and view all these comforts as the effects of infinite, unmerited goodness; of goodness, the operations of which I can trace through all my past life; of goodness, which I humbly hope and trust will continue to bless me through all my future existence."

"*November* 18, 1805.

"My dear Mother,

"I last night witnessed a scene to which I had before been a stranger; it was a death-bed scene. A young gentleman of my acquaintance, and nearly of my own age, had been confined thirty-two days, and I was requested to watch with him; and a more exquisitely distressing task I hope never to undertake. When I went, there was little, if any hope of his life. His mother—whose favorite he deservedly was—though she is, I believe, a sincere Christian, seemed unable to support the idea of a separation. Fatigue and loss of sleep made her light-headed and, at times, she raved almost as badly as the patient. His sister, a gay thoughtless girl, was in a paroxysm of loud and turbulent grief; while a young lady, whom he was expecting to marry, heightened the distress by marks of anguish too strong to be concealed, and which seemed to flow from tenderness equal to any thing I have met with in romance. As I had seen nothing of the kind before, its effects on my feelings were irresistible. The perpetual groans and ravings of the dying—whose head I was for hours obliged to support with one hand while I wiped off the sweat of death with the other; the inarticulate expressions of anguish, mingled with the prayers of the mother; the loud and bitter lamentations of the sister; the stifled agonies of the young lady, and the cries of the younger branches of the family, (*the father was asleep!*) formed a combination of sounds which I could scarcely support. Add to this the frightful contortions and apparent agonies of the poor sufferer, with all the symptoms of approaching death About two o'clock he died. I then had the no less difficult and painful task of endeavoring to quiet the family. The mother, when convinced he was certainly dead, became composed, and, with much persuasion and some force, was prevailed upon to take her bed, as were the rest of the family, except the young lady.

"You will not wonder if I feel to-day exhausted in body and mind. Surely there is no torture like seeing distress without the ability of removing it. All day have I heard the dying groans sounding in my ears. I could not have believed it possible that any thing could take such astonishing hold of the mind; and, unless you can remember the first death you ever witnessed, you can never conceive how it affected me

But, distressing as it was, I would not for any thing have been absent. I hope it will be of service to me. It *is* better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of mirth. Grief has a strong tendency to soften the heart, and dispose it to gratitude and other affections. An instance of this I saw in this family. They are so grateful to me for—I don't know what—that they seem unable to thank me enough."

"*January* 25, 1806.

"I had a letter from ****** last evening. He is in the West Indies, and has just recovered from a fever. His letter is more friendly than any I have received, but it is not so serious as I wish. You prophesied, when I was at home, that our friendship would not last long; but since it has survived a visit to the Cataract of Niagara, to Saratoga Springs, and a voyage to the West Indies, it is something of a proof that many waters cannot quench, neither floods drown it.

"A classmate, who has commenced preaching, called last week to see me. Speaking of an old tutor of ours, a very pious man, who has lately lost a much loved wife, he mentioned a letter written by him, in which he says, 'The bell is now tolling for my wife's funeral; yet I am happy, happy beyond expression.' This my classmate considered as a sure proof of a very weak or very insensible mind. It is needless to add, that he rejects evangelical religion, of the truth and reality of which I am daily more and more convinced. But I cannot wonder so few embrace it: so long as the reasonings of the head continue to be influenced by the feelings of the heart, men will eject it."

"*February* 9, 1806.

"You need be under no apprehension, my dear mother, that my present mode of living will render the manner of living in the most rustic neighborhood disagreeable. On the contrary, I shall be glad of the exchange, as it respects diet; for I find it no easy matter to sit down to a table profusely spread with dainties, and take no more than nature requires and temperance allows. And I should have infinitely more satisfaction in the conversation of a plain, unlettered Christian, than in the unmeaning tattle of the drawing-room, or the flippant vivacity of professed wits. What gives me most uneasiness, and what I fear will always be a thorn in my path, is, too great a thirst for applause. When I sit down to write, I perpetually catch myself considering, not what will be most useful, but what will be most likely to gain praise from an audience. If I should be unpopular, it would, I fear, give me more uneasiness than it ought; and if—though I think there is little reason to fear it—I should *in any degree* be acceptable, what a terrible blaze it would make in my bosom! What a temptation this disposition will be to suppress, or lightly touch upon those doctrines which are most important, because they are disagreeable to most persons! I should at once give up in despair, had I nothing but my own philosophy to depend on; but I hope and trust I shall be enabled to conquer it.

"If you knew the many things which rendered it unlikely that I should continue here half so long as I have, you would join with me in thinking an overruling Providence very visible in the whole affair. With respect to continuing longer, I do not mean to form a single plan on the subject. If I know any thing of my own heart, I can appeal to God as a witness of my earnest desire to be in the situation where he sees best to place me, without any regard to its being agreeable or disagreeable; and he can, and, I doubt not, will order matters so as to shorten or prolong my stay here as he pleases."

"*January* 15, 1806.

"If you, my dear mother, can pick out the meaning in the last page, I shall be glad; for in truth it is but poorly expressed. You must have observed that my letters are very obscure; that the transitions from one subject to another are rapid and capricious. The reason of this confusion is,—when I sit down to write, forty ideas jump at once, all equally eager to get out, and jostle and incommode each other at such a rate, that not the most proper, but the strongest, escapes first. My mind would fain pour itself all out at once. So much by way of apology, by which, as is usually the case with apologies, I have only made bad worse"

"*April* 2, 1806.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I have just received your last *paquet*, and am so rejoiced I can hardly sit still enough to write. They were not half long enough to satiate me, and I am more hungry than before. Yesterday, in order to appease my hunger, I read over all the letters I have received this year past, to my great satisfaction. You must not expect method nor *legible writing*. These qualifications are necessary in a *billet of compliments*, but in a letter to friends, I despise them. However, if my good friends are fond of them, and prefer them to the rapid effusions of affection that will hardly wait the pen's motion, I will soon write a letter that shall be as cold and as splendid as an ice-palace. You may usually observe my hand-writing is much better at the beginning than at the end of my letters; and this happens because I gather warmth as I write. A letter to a friend, written with exact care, is like—'Madam, I hope I have the pleasure of seeing you in very good health,"—addressed to a mother, on meeting her after a year's absence.

"I did not recollect that I made use of a billet to enclose my letters. However, I suppose it did just as well. Pray give my love to Phillips, (with the rest of the dear clan,) and tell him, that, instead of being a sign of poverty, it is the surest way to be rich, to save even the cover of a letter; besides, I have papa's authority for using billets in that way."

These extracts show how he appreciated the relations of son and brother, and how just he was to all the claims which these relations involve. His filial affection is among the loveliest traits in his character, and it never suffered any abatement, so long as he had a parent to love. He continued to appropriate, unasked, and of choice, the excess of his earnings above his expenditures, to the use of his parents, till the whole amount expended for his education had been reimbursed. By word and deed, in the thousand ways which affection suggests, he sought their comfort and happiness.

It was not till the third year of his residence in Portland, that he made his first appearance before a popular assembly. On the 4th of July, 1806, at the request of the municipal authorities of the town, he pronounced the anniversary oration,—a performance which secured him unbounded applause, and which he was solicited, with great earnestness, to allow to be published; but no persuasion could induce him to give a copy.

CHAPTER III.

His religious history during the period embraced in the preceding chapter.

From the early part of 1804, religion seems to have been his all-engrossing concern; his attention was then arrested, and fixed so as never afterwards to be diverted, for any length of time, from the subject. Whether he had been in an unconverted, or backslidden state, he was then roused, as from sleep, to take a solemn view of his relations as an accountable and immortal being. The occasion of this new or revived concern for his soul was the death of a beloved brother. A letter to his parents, in answer to one which announced the sorrowful tidings, is the earliest production of his pen, which has escaped oblivion, and, on this account alone, will be read with interest. But it has a higher value, as it enables us to date the commencement of his attention to his spiritual interests as far back as May 20, 1804,* the time when his letter was dated, and it more than intimates that the subject with him was not new.

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* It has been stated, on credible authority, that Dr. Payson was so much affected by this bereavement, that he confined

"My dear mother's fears respecting my attention to religious concerns were, alas! but too well founded. Infatuated by the pleasures and amusements which this place affords, and which took the more powerful hold on my senses from being adorned with a refinement to which I had before been a stranger, I gradually grew cold and indifferent to religion; and, though I still made attempts to reform, they were too transient to be effectual.

"From this careless frame nothing but a shock like that I have received could have roused me; and though my deceitful heart will, I fear, draw me back again into the snare, as soon as the first impression is worn off, yet I hope, by the assistance of divine grace, that this dispensation will prove of eternal benefit. This is my most earnest prayer, and I know it will be yours.

"In reflecting on the ends of Divine Providence in this event, I am greatly distressed. To you, my dear parents, it could not be necessary. My sister, as you sometime since informed me, has turned her attention to religion; the other children are too young to receive benefit from it. It remains, then, that I am the Achan who has drawn down this punishment, and occasioned this distress to my friends. My careless, obdurate heart rendered it necessary to punish and humble it:

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himself to his chamber for three days; and that, previously to this period, he had purposed to devote himself to the profession of the law. If so, the affliction was no less a mercy to the church than to himself.

"God is his own interpreter."

and O that the punishment had fallen where it was due! But I can pursue the subject no further."

Here is the subdued tone of the penitent, "come to himself, and returning to his Father." Of his progress in piety for the next six months, nothing is known except what may be inferred from a letter dated Dec. 12th of the same year. An extract will show that he was not inattentive to what passed in his own heart, nor without experience in the Christian conflict.

"I have nothing but complaints of myself to make, nothing but the same old story of erring and repenting, but never reforming. I fear I am in a sad way. I attend public worship and think of every subject but the proper one; or if, by strong exertions, I fix my attention for a few minutes, I feel an irresistible propensity to criticise the preacher, instead of attending to the instructions; and, notwithstanding a full conviction that this conduct is wrong, I persist in it still. Hence it happens that the Sabbath, which is so admirably calculated to keep alive a sense of religion, becomes a stumbling-block. The thought of my sinful neglect and inattention so shames and distresses me, that I am unable to approach the throne of grace, through shame. As this, I know, is the fruit of a self-righteous spirit, I strive against it; and after two or three days, perhaps, am enabled to trust in Christ for the pardon of that and other sins. But, another Sabbath, the same round is repeated. Thus I go on, sinning and humbling myself after long seeking for a proper sense of my sin, then confessing it with contrition and remorse; and, the next moment, even while the joy of obtained pardon and gratitude for divine favor is thrilling in my heart, plunging, on the most trivial temptation, into the same error, whose bitter consequences I had so lately felt. Shame and remorse for the ungrateful returns I have made for the blessings bestowed, prevent secret prayer, frequently for two or three days together, until I can no longer support it; and though I have so often experienced forgiving love, I am too proud to ask for it."

A few weeks afterwards he writes thus:—"I feel convinced by experience, that, if I relax my exertions for ever so short a time, it will require additional exertions to repair it, and perhaps occasion a week's gloom and despondency; yet the least temptation leads me to do what I feel conscious, at the time, I shall severely smart for. In the impracticable attempt to reconcile God and the world, I spend my time very unhappily, neither enjoying the comforts of this world nor of religion. But I have at last determined to renounce the false pleasures for which I pay so dear; and this I should have done long ago, but for the advice and example of some whose judgment I respected.

"I have lately been severely tried with doubts and difficulties respecting many parts of Scripture. Reading the other day, I met with this passage, 'for his great name's sake.' It was immediately suggested to my mind, that, as the Deity bestowed all his favor on us 'for his great name's sake,' we were under no obligation to feel grateful for them. And though my heart assented to the propriety of gratitude, my head would not. In hearing my scholars recite the Greek Testament, I am disturbed by numberless seeming inconsistencies and doubts, which, though they do not shake my belief, render me for a time extremely miserable. I find no relief, in these trials, from the treatises which have been written in proof of the truth of revelation. It is from a different source that assistance is received.'

"*April* 20, 1805.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"I have just been perusing something excessively interesting to my feelings. It is a short extract from your journal in my sister's letter. Surely it is my own fault that I do not resemble Samuel in more instances than one. What a disgrace to me, that, with such rare and inestimable advantages, I have made no greater progress! However, thanks to the fervent, effectual prayer of my righteous parents, and the tender mercies of my God upon me, I have reason to hope that the pious wishes breathed over my infant head are in some measure fulfilled; nor would I exchange the benefits which I have received from my parents for the inheritance of any monarch* in the universe.

"I feel inclined to hope that I am progressing, though by slow and imperceptible degrees, in the knowledge of divine things. On comparing my former and present views, I find that the latter are much less confused and perplexed; that I have clearer conceptions of my utter inability to take a single step in religion without divine assistance, of the consequent necessity of a Savior, and of the way of salvation by him. Yet I cannot find that my conduct, my heart, or disposition, is made better. On the contrary, I fe they are worse than ever."

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* The admirers of Cowper—between whom and the subject of this Memoir there are several strong points of resemblance—will be reminded, at once, of those beautiful lines:

"My boast is not that I deduce my birth
"From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth,
"But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
"The son of parents passed into the skies."

June 12, 1805.

"I find I have been trying to establish a righteousness of my own, though till lately I thought myself free from any such design. Hence arose all that unwillingness to perform the public and private exercises of devotion which I felt after any neglect of duty. I wanted, forsooth, to be encouraged to hope for an answer of peace by some merits of my own, and so felt unwilling to approach the throne of grace when I had been guilty of any thing which lessened my stock of goodness. In short, it was the same kind of reluctance which I should feel to approach a fellow-being whom I had injured. And this, which I now see arose from pride, I fondly thought was the effect of great humility. Finding myself so deceived here, and in numberless other instances, I am utterly at a loss what to do. If I attempt to perform any duty, I am afraid it is only an attempt to build up a fabric of my own; and if I neglect it, the case is still worse.

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"Since the period of my leaving home for Cambridge, it has appeared the most discouraging circumstance attending the spread of religion, that many who undertake to preach it are so shamefully negligent. Of this, my dear mother, you can form no just idea, unless you have heard them. While their hearers are wishing and longing for spiritual food, they are obliged to rest content with cold, dry lectures on morality, enforced by any motives rather than evangelical. These ministers content themselves, generally, with pruning off some of the most prominent excrescences of vice they leave the root untouched, and cut off only the leaves. The more I think of it, the more difficult does the duty appear; and I tremble at the thought of incurring such a responsibility. I fear, however, that part of my reluctance arises from an indolent disposition, from an unwillingness to encounter the fatigues the difficulties and dangers attending the performance of a clergyman's duty. I am afraid of conferring too much with flesh and blood."

The next notices which he has left of himself are found in a manuscript volume, written in characters which it has been a long and difficult work to decipher. The following are the first two paragraphs:—

"*July* 25, 1805. This day, being my twenty-second birth-day, I have determined to commence a diary, as a check on the misemployment of time."

Same date. "Having resolved this day to dedicate myself to my Creator, in a serious and solemn manner, by a written covenant, I took a review of my past life, and of the numerous mercies by which it has been distinguished. Then, with sincerity, as I humbly hope I took the Lord to be my God, and engaged to love, serve, and obey him. Relying on the assistance of his Holy Spirit, I engaged to take the Holy Scriptures as the rule of my conduct, the Lord Jesus Christ to be my Savior, and the Spirit of all grace and consolation as my Guide and Sanctifier. The vows of God are upon me."

Subsequent entries in his diary show an ever-active desire to "pay the vows which his lips had uttered.

He made strenuous efforts to redeem the morning hours from sleep, that he might enjoy an uninterrupted season for reading the Scriptures, and other devotional exercises; and, when he failed of this, he suffered much in consequence, and lamented it with deep feeling. His diligence in business, as well as fervor of spirit, are abundantly apparent from the account which he has given of the employment of every hour, from four in the morning to ten at night.—In a letter to his parents, written on this anniversary, he speaks of having already "paid considerable attention to divinity," and of expecting, "in another year, to commence preaching, if he should feel competent to such an undertaking."

"*Portland*, *July* 25, 1805.

"MY DEAR PARENT ,

"This day, which completes my twenty-second year, renews the remembrance of the numerous claims your continued care and kindness have on my gratitude and affection. To you, next to my heavenly Father, I owe that I exist, that I am in a situation to support myself, and, what is a still greater obligation, to your admonitions and instructions I am indebted for all the moral and religious impressions which are imprinted in my mind, and which, I hope, under God, will give me reason to love and bless you through eternity. How can I feel sufficient gratitude to the Giver of all good for blessing me with such parents! and how can I thank you sufficiently for all the kindness you have lavished upon me, as yet without return! But it shall be the study of my life to show that I am not utterly devoid of every sentiment of gratitude and duty. Pardon me, my dearest parents, for all the pain, the trouble, and anxiety I have given you, and believe me while I promise never knowingly to be guilty of any thing to increase the uneasiness I have already occasioned you. I consider it as one of my greatest blessings, that I am now in a situation which prevents my being a charge to you, and which, besides, might enable me, in case of misfortune, to repay some small part of the kindness I have received. I, with all I do or may possess, am your property, for you alone put me in a situation to obtain it. And if there be any thing (as I doubt not there is) which could contribute to your happiness, in my power to procure for you, I most earnestly entreat you to let me know it; and if I do not with the utmost pleasure comply, cast me off as an ungrateful wretch, utterly unworthy of your kindness and affection."

Mr. Payson made a public profession of religion September 1, 1805. He connected himself originally with the church in Rindge, under the pastoral care of his father, while on a visit to his parents during one of his quarterly vacations. Of his exercises in the near prospect of this solemn act, not a memorial remains. The only direct allusion to this public dedication of himself to God, is in a letter to his mother, written a short time afterwards, in which he says—"As yet I have no reason to repent of the step I took while at home. On the contrary, I esteem it a great blessing that no obstacles prevented it." He adds, "I have felt wondrous brave and resolute since my return; but I rejoice with trembling. If I know any thing of myself, I shall need pretty severe discipline through life;

and I often shrink at the thought of the conflicts tha await me, but am encouraged by the promise that my strength shall be equal to my day." Never were apprehensions and hopes more signally realized. He who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," however, reserved the bitterest trials for a confirmed state of religious experience, mercifully indulging his servant with the light of his countenance, and a peaceful and happy progress in his pilgrimage, in its earliest stages

October 6th, he writes—"I know it will add to your happiness, my dear mother, to hear that I possess a large quantity of that desirable commodity. Since my return from Rindge, bating a few disagreeable days after parting with my friends, I have hardly known one unhappy moment. The doubts which formerly obscured my mind are dissipated, and I have enjoyed, and do still enjoy, mental peace, and, at times, happiness inexpressible. When I am thus happy, it renders me so benevolent that I want to make every one partake of it, and can hardly forbear preaching to every man I see. At the same time, the thought of what I deserve, compared with what I enjoy, humbles me to the dust; and the lower I get, the more happy do I feel; and then I am so full of gratitude and love, I can hardly support it. My only source of unhappiness, at such times, is the moral certainty that I shall again offend that God who is so infinitely, so condescendingly kind. This, indeed, seems impossible at the time; it then seems that worldly objects cannot possibly again acquire an undue influence over my mind. * * * * To think that I shall again become cold and inanimate, that I shall again offend and grieve the Holy Spirit, and perhaps be left openly to disho nor the holy name by which I am called—my dear mother, how distressing!"

"*October* 29.

—— These worldly comforts are nothing to the serenity and peace of mind with which I am favored, and the happiness arising from love, gratitude, and confidence. Even contrition and remorse for having slighted so long such infinite and condescending mercy, is not without a pleasing kind of pain. But I know this state of things is too good to continue long; and I hope I shall be enabled to take up with a much smaller number of the comforts of life without murmuring."

In a letter, dated November 11th, he says, "The happiness I mentioned in my last, and in which you so kindly participate, I still enjoy, though diminished, in some degree, by an examination I have been making respecting some important but perplexing truths."

Some weeks after this he wrote—"I did not intend to say another word about my feelings; but I must, or else cease writing. I am so happy that I cannot possibly think nor write of any thing else. Such a glorious, beautiful, consistent scheme for the redemption of such miserable wretches!—such infinite love and goodness, joined with such wisdom! I would, if possible, raise my voice so that the whole universe, to its remotest bounds, might hear me, if any language could be found worthy of such a subject. How transporting, and yet how humiliating, are the displays of divine goodness, which, at some favored moments, we feel! what happiness in humbling ourselves in the dust, and confessing our sins and unworthiness!"

A solicitude for the spiritual welfare of others, which is among the early fruits of experimental religion, and one of the most pleasing evidences of its existence was, in Mr. Payson, coeval with his profession of the faith and hope of the Gospel. Of this his pupils, as was to be expected, were always the most interesting objects.—September 20th he writes—"Last Saturday I gave my scholars six questions in the catechism and a hymn to commit to memory on the Sabbath; and, on Monday morning, after hearing them recite, I lectured them on the subjects about three quarters of an hour. They paid strict attention. It is, however, discouraging to attempt any thing of this kind, and a most lively faith alone can make it otherwise. Is it not astonishing, that those who have a just sense of the importance of religion are not more earnest in recommending it to others? One would suppose they could hardly refrain from preaching to them in the streets. The reason we do not is. we have not a just sense of it."

'*October* 29.

"I hope your narrative—for which I thank you—will have a tendency to stir me up. I feel a strong and abiding impression on my mind, that all the good I enjoy my friends were stirred up to pray for; and I hope that my scholars also, in this case, will reap the benefit When I look at them, and reflect how many dangers they are exposed to, what bad examples even the parents of many set them, and how few hear any thing like religious instruction, I cannot express my feelings. Lately I feel a great flow of words when addressing them; however, it is just like speaking to dry bones, unless a divine blessing assist. If I could be the means of doing good only to one, what transport! Thank God, it does not depend on the means, but on himself; otherwise I should give up in despair."

"*January* 15, 1806.

"This morning I was highly favored in speaking to my scholars. I spoke nearly three quarters of an hour with some earnestness, though not so much as I could have wished. Except once, I have felt a very considerable share of freedom on these occasions. Your mentioning that you were enabled to pray for a blessing on these poor endeavors has been a great encouragement to me. They are attentive, and a very perceptible difference has taken place in their attention to their studies. I hope that, sooner or later, they will become attentive to more important pursuits. I am almost afraid to write even to you, my dear mother, on these subjects, lest I should make some gross blunder, through my ignorance and inexperience. I have often observed, that persons who begin to read late in life are apt to think every thing they meet with in books as new to others as it is to them, and so make themselves ridiculous by retailing, as novelty, what every one knew before. In like manner, I am somewhat apprehensive of appearing to you, in mentioning my own feelings, as one who is detailing last year's news; for your ideas and feelings must be so far beyond mine, that it will require some patience to read my relations. However, I trust to your goodness, and hope you will remember, that many things, which are now plain and common, were once dark and unusual to you. I am pursuing my studies pretty much at random, having no person to advise with."

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This anxiety for the souls of his fellow-creatures marked his intercourse with associates of the same standing with himself. One of his valued companions in literary pursuits has furnished the following extracts from his pen:

"*December* 2, 1805.

"There is no worldly blessing that is not heightened by religion, but none more so than friendship, whether it be between relatives by consanguinity, or those who are joined in marriage, or other friends. The idea of parting must imbitter the pleasure of the man of the world; but the Christian, if he has chosen his friends aright, may hope to enjoy their society with more pleasure hereafter than he can now. For this reason I never should choose a partner for life whom I could not hope to meet beyond the tomb."

"*December* 9.

"You ascribe, my friend, too much to age and a cultivated mind, when you speak of them as inconsistent with a 'stupid blindness respecting futurity.' Sad experience shows that age the most mature, and minds the most cultivated, are too often under the operation of such a blindness. Who, among the walks of science, ambition, avarice, or pleasure, is not blind to his own mortality? Who is there who sees that every hour of his life he infringes that law which says—'cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written therein to do them?' Who sees that his brittle thread of life is all on which he hangs over endless misery; and that, if any one of the many dangers to which he is exposed should be permitted to crush him.

he would, in a moment, be the subject of despair? No age, no improvement of the mind, will make us *see* these truths to be such. We may assent to them, but our conduct shows we do not believe them. You do not yet, my friend, know the difficulty of the task. Consider, first, that the divine law extends to the thoughts, and that it makes no allowance for human infirmity, and then shut yourself up alone, out of the reach of temptation, and try for one hour to be innocent, and you will find, by the numberless foolish thoughts and vicious propensities arising in your mind, that it is no easy thing to be *negatively* good. When, in addition to this, you consider that sins of omission are equally fatal with sins of commission, you must certainly, if you know any thing of your own heart, give up in despair. I write this not to discourage you, but to urge the immediate commencement of a work so difficult and so important; and still more to induce you to apply to One who can give you strength, and will give it, if asked for in a full conviction of your own weakness. You know nothing of your own heart, and, though you may not assent to this now, the time, I hope and trust, will come, when you will assent to it. You may not now believe that naturally, like all others, you are an enemy to God and his goodness—but you must assent to it."

"*May* 8.

"Take my word for it, there is inexpressibly more enjoyment in religion, in this life, than the most happy sinner since creation ever had to boast of. It appears gloomy at a distance, but, the nearer it approaches the more delightful it becomes. You know that I am of a social turn, that I enjoy, or did enjoy amusements about as well as others did, and that I have no particular reason for flying from them. You know, too, that I love you, and would promote your interest to the extent of my powers. You may then consider me, if you are so disposed, an impartial witness that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. I hope and believe that your own feelings may attest the truth of my testimony. That you may know more and more of it, is the sincere prayer of your friend."

"*July* 7.

"I dare pledge any thing most dear to me, that, if you persist in the diligent use of the means suggested, you shall not long use them in vain. But, what is infinitely more to the purpose, you have the oath of Him who cannot lie, on which to ground your hopes. You have nothing to do but, in the exercise of faith, to come, as the leper did to our Savior while on earth, and throw yourself at his feet, with—'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;' and rest assured that he will put forth his hand and say—'I will; be thou clean.' He is still as able and as willing to grant every request of this nature as he was on earth. If you really feel yourself a sinner, and that you have no power to save yourself, and are willing to accept of him as a Savior, he is ready to receive you. Do not wait, before you accept his offers, to render yourself worthy of his favor by going about to establish a righteousness of your own. He will not be a half Savior. He will do all or nothing. If you mean to come to him, you must come as a helpless sinner; not as the Pharisee, with a list of virtuous deeds performed. but as the publican, with—'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.'"

On account of the station he occupied, as well as the inexhaustible fund of entertainment which he could carry into company, he was frequently solicited to make one of a visiting party, and to mingle in society on various occasions. The nature of the trials hence arising, as well as their issue, will be seen from a few extracts.

"After long doubting the propriety, and even the lawfulness, of mixing at all in society, where duty does not call, and after smarting a number of times for indulging myself in it—more, however, through fear of offending, than for any pleasure I find in it—I am at length brought to renounce it entirely; and it is not a needless scrupulosity. It does appear a duty to shun all communication with the world, when there is no well-grounded reason to hope to do good. There are, to be sure, many very plausible reasons, but I doubt whether they will bear the test of Scripture."

To one who urged him to go into society and frequent public amusements, he wrote:

"Can a man walk on pitch, and his feet not be defiled? Can a man take coals of fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? If he can, he may then mix freely with the world, and not be contaminated. But I am not the one who can do it. I cannot think it proper or expedient for a Christian to go into any company, unless necessity calls, where he may, perhaps, hear the name he loves and reverences blasphemed, or at least profaned—where that book, which he esteems the word of God, will, if mentioned, be alluded to only to waken laughter or 'adorn a tale,'—where the laws of good breeding are almost the only laws which may not be broken with impunity—and where every thing he hears or sees has a strong tendency to extinguish the glow of devotion, and entirely banish seriousness. I speak only for myself. Others may experience no bad effects; but, for myself, when I go into company, if it is pleasant and agreeable, it has a tendency only to fix my thoughts on earth, from which it is my duty and my desire to turn them—to give me a distaste for serious duties, especially prayer and meditation; and to render me desirous of the applause and approbation of those with whom I associate. I cannot avoid feeling some desire for its friendship; and this friendship, the apostle assures us, and my own experience feelingly convinces me, is enmity with God."

"I have at length obtained satisfaction respecting my doubts about society; not, however, till I was brought to give it up. After I had done so, it appeared so plain and proper, that I wondered how a doubt could ever have arisen on this subject. Now, I shall hardly see a person in a week except our own family; and I have no doubt of being much happier for it. Two or three plain rules I find of wonderful service in deciding all difficult cases. One is, *to do nothing of which I doubt in any degree the lawfulness;* the second, *to consider every thing as unlawful which indisposes me for prayer, and interrupts communion with God;* and the third is, *never to go into any company, business, or situation, in which I cannot conscientiously ask and expect the divine presence.* By the help of these three rules I settle all my doubts in a trice, and find that many things I have hitherto indulged in, are, if not utterly unlawful, at least inexpedient, and I can renounce them without many sighs."

His determination to exclude himself from company was very conscientiously formed; and, so far was he from making his own practice a law for others in this matter, he expressly assigns his "weakness and inexperience" as the reason why he "could not indulge in society without detriment." Besides, situated as he was, he saw "no medium between the life of a recluse and that of a votary of pleasure." If such were the alternative, his decision is to be approved. It resulted from a right application of his "three plain rules," which are certainly Scriptural, and worthy of universal adoption. This course was not the fruit of misanthropic feelings; for no man was more susceptible of the delights of friendship, or more highly appreciated its benefits; but how "can two walk together except they be agreed?" His heart now sighed for friendships founded on a religious basis. He speaks of "a friend, with whom he could converse on religious subjects, as having long been a desideratum;" and when he thought he had found such a one among his former beloved associates, he expresses the most ardent gratitude to the Giver of every good gift. "I feel a satisfaction," he writes, "on this discovery, similar to what I should feel at meeting a townsman in a desert island. You, who live in the midst of Christian friends, can hardly conceive of it. Associates are pleasant in any pursuit, but especially so in this. Two are better than one. We shall together be better able to stand our ground against the assaults of ridicule and reproach; and may animate and encourage each other in our course."

Having, in a letter to his mother, expressed himself as ready to give almost any thing he possessed for an 'experienced friend," he anticipates her reply,—"You will say, perhaps, the Bible is a friend, which, if duly consulted, would supersede the necessity of any other adviser. It may be so; but we are apt to be bad commentators where we are concerned ourselves. A friend can judge of our concerns, and give us better counsel than, perhaps, he would give himself. We are but poor casuists in our own affairs."

Some miscellaneous extracts will now be given.

"*December* 8, 1805.

"Though I have experienced many and great comforts, yet I am at times almost discouraged. My heart seems to be a soil so bad, that all labor is thrown away upon it; for, instead of growing better, it grows worse. What a wearisome task, or rather conflict, it is, to be always fighting with an enemy, whom no defeats can weaken or tire. I am afraid that many of my desires to be delivered from his power proceed rather from a sinful impatience than a better source. But it is most distressing, when favored with manifestations of a Savior's love, to think we shall again sin against and grieve him; especially in the sacrament of the supper, the idea that I shall certainly go away and offend him who is there set forth crucified before me, embitters all my happiness."

"*December* 25.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I am not very prone to indulge the idea that my happiness can depend on change of place; but when such fancies do gain admittance, home is always the scene of my imaginary bliss. It is, however, a remedy to consider, that, however we may be separated from our friends in this world, yet, if we choose them aright. we may indulge the hope of spending an eternity together in the next.

"I have of late taken some pleasure in recollecting the pilgrimages of our old friend Bunyan, and see a striking propriety in many parts of them, which I did not then rightly understand. For some time past I have been with Tender Conscience in the caves of Good Resolution and Contemplation, and, like him, fell into the clutches of Spiritual Pride. It is astonishing, and what nothing but sad experience could make us believe, that Satan and a corrupt heart should have the art of extracting the most dangerous poison from those things which apparently would, and certainly ought to have the most beneficial effects. If I do not, after all, fall into the hands of old Carnal Security, I shall have reason to be thankful. There is such a fascination in the magic circle of worldly pleasures and pursuits, as can hardly be conceived without experience; and I am astonished and vexed to find its influence continually thwarting and hindering me. And so many plausible excuses are perpetually suggesting themselves, that compliance can hardly be avoided."

"*January* 25.

"My DEAR MOTHER,

"In one of the classics, which form part of my daily occupation, there is an account of a tyrant who used to torture his subjects by binding them to dead bodies, and leaving them to perish by an unnatural and painful death. I have often thought the situation of a Christian is, in some respects, like that of these poor wretches. Bound to a loathsome body of sin, from which death alone can free him, and obliged daily to experience effects from it not much less painful and displeasing to him than a putrefying carcass was to those who were united to it, he must suffer almost continual torment. I have lately felt doubtful how far a due resignation to the divine will obliges us to submit with patience to this most painful of all trials, and, since we know that perfection is not granted to any in this world, how far we ought to extend our prayers and wishes. I know there is little danger of being too much engaged in seeking deliverance from sin; but is there no danger of that fretful impatience which we are apt to feel on other occasions, gaining admittance under the appearance of an earnest desire for holiness? And is not indolence, and a wish to be freed from the necessity of continual watchfulness and conflict, apt to insinuate itself into our desires and petitions for divine assistance? Sin is a sly traitor; and it is but lately I discovered it in my bosom; and now I am so much afraid of it, that I hardly dare ask assistance at all.

" For this month past, I have enjoyed very little of that happiness which I once rejoiced in. Yet, blessed be God! I am not left utterly dead and stupid, and am enabled to persevere in the use of means, though they seldom seem so productive of peace as they once did. I hope I have clearer ideas of my strong, amazingly strong, propensity to every thing that is evil, and of the infinite and glorious sufficiency of my Savior, than I had while my joys were greater. Then I was ready to flatter myself that sin was destroyed; but now I find, by sad experience, it is not only alive, but extremely active; and had I not an Almighty Helper, I should instantly give up in despair."

"*Portland*, *Feb.* 9, 1806.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"For many reasons, it is impossible that my letters should be so acceptable at home as those I receive from home are to me. You have friends there to divide your attention, to participate in your care, and to share and increase your pleasures. But I am alone. All my affections must centre at home, and, consequently, I must feel a greater desire to hear from home, and to receive assurances that I am not forgotten, than my friends can possibly have to hear from me.

"I find nobody, except at times, to whom I can communicate my joys, hopes, desires, and fears; nobody who can participate my pleasures or sympathize in my griefs. It is perhaps best for me that it should be so; but it is very unpleasant. Most of my acquaintance consider me, as near as I can guess, but a kind of hypocrite, who must, as a student in divinity, preserve a decent exterior in order to be respected. However, it is some consolation that they think the same of every one else. Their opinion is of very trifling consequence. One thing only I wish not to be thought, and that is, what is commonly called a *rational* Christian, an epithet which is very frequently bestowed on young candidates, and which is almost synonymous with *no* Christian. *Liberal* divines are pretty much of the same character."

"*Portland*, *April* 1, 1806.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I am now entirely alone, and, except a visit once a fortnight from Mr. R. I see no face within my chamber from one week to another. It is sometimes unpleasant, but, I believe, very profitable, to be debarred from society. I am so prone to trust to broken cisterns, that nothing but their being out of my reach can restrain me. When I come home from school, weary and dull, if I had any earthly friends at hand I should certainly apply to them for relief; but, not having any, I am constrained to go where I am much more sure of finding it. I begin to find, that the smiles with which my early infancy was supported, are changing for the less agreeable, but certainly not less needful, discipline of education; and O what severe discipline and how much of it, shall I require! I see already that hard fare and hard labor will be necessary to preserve me from 'waxing fat and kicking;' and if it has this effect, I shall welcome it with pleasure. It seems to me one of the worst of the hellish offspring of fallen nature, that it should have such a tendency to pride and above all, spiritual pride. How many artifices does it contrive to hide itself! If, at any time, I am favored with clearer discoveries of my natural and acquired depravity and hatefulness in the sight of God, and am enabled to mourn over it, in comes Spiritual Pride, with—'Ay, this is something like! this is holy mourning for sin; this is true humility.' If I happen to detect and spurn at these thoughts, immediately he changes his battery, and begins—'Another person would have indulged those feelings, and imagined he was really humble, but you know better; you can detect and banish pride at once, as you ought to do.' Thus this hateful enemy continually harasses me What a proof that the heart is the native soil of pride when it thus contrives to gather strength from those very exercises which one would think must destroy it utterly!

"My other chief besetting sin, which will cut out abundance of work for me, is fondness for applause When I sit down to write, this demon is immediately in the way, prompting to seek for such observations as will be admired, rather than such as will be felt, and have a tendency to do good. My proneness to these two evils, which I have mentioned, makes me think I shall have but little sensible comfort in this world, and that I shall be tried by many and grievous afflictions, in order to keep me humble and dependent. However, it is of no consequence. I know my great Physician is both able and willing to cure me, and I leave the manner to him; trusting he will enable me to take whatever he prescribes, and bless the prescription."

"*Portland*, *June* 17, 1806.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"After I have told you that I have been unwell some time past, and that I am now as well as usual, my stock of information is exhausted—unless, indeed, I still make myself the subject; and, for want of a better, I must. Owing partly, I believe, to my ill health, I have been much afflicted with doubt, whether it is not my duty to give up preaching at all. I want, at times, to get as far back into the country as possible, and, on a little farm, lead a life as much remote from observation as circumstances will allow. It seems to me a little remarkable, that, while I am harassed with doubts and perplexities about every thing else, I feel none, or comparatively none, about my own state. If at any time such doubts intrude, they are banished by that text, 'I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for *mine own sake*.' But, lately, the very absence of doubt has caused me to doubt; for if I were a child of God, how should I be free from those doubts which trouble his children? But the greatest difficulty of all is, that the certainty which I almost ever feel of my safety, should have no more effect on my disposition and conduct. This seems to me more unaccountable than any thing else; for even the devils, one would think, might and would rejoice to think of approaching happiness.

"I have, for some time, had something like a desire to become a missionary. I have not mentioned it before, because I doubted whether it would not be only a temporary wish. I should feel less backward to preach to savages, or white men little above savages, than any where else. However, I hope Providence will, some way or other, get me into the place where I shall be most useful, be it what it may. I do not feel very solicitous in which way or in what situation.

"I shall be in Boston about the 23d of August, and, after commencement, set out for Rindge, should nothing prevent. At present I can write no more. The bearer is booted, whipped, chaired, and waiting.

"Present my most affectionate regards to pa'. I shall make great encroachments on his time when I come home.

"Your affectionate son,
"E. PAYSON."

A desire to become a missionary, in 1806, was a less dubious proof of expansive Christian benevolence than it would be at the present day. The obligation of Christians to send the Gospel to the heathen could not have been learned from any thing which the American Church was then doing, or had done for a long period. As to any visible movement, she appeared as indifferent to the claims of the unevangelized tribes of men, as though her Redeemer and Lord had not left it in charge to "preach the Gospel to every creature." Mr. Payson was probably ignorant that another youthful bosom in the country panted with the same desire; though it was about this time, if not in this very year—a coincidence which they who regard the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands, will notice with pleasure—that Samuel J. Mills felt the desire, and formed the purpose, to devote his life to the service of Christ among the heathen—a purpose, however, which was known, first to his mother, and then to a few individuals only, till about four years afterwards.

In the extracts which have been inserted from his letters, the reader has discovered his intimate acquaintance with the subtle workings of the human heart, and his unsleeping vigilance to detect and guard against its impositions. His self-knowledge, and the rigid self inspection which he habitually maintained, would appear in a still more striking light from his private diary, if that were spread before the public eye. Neither friends nor foes could name a fault in him, which he had not detected, and condemned in terms of unsparing severity. They would find their severest judgments anticipated; and they would find too—what the world little suspects of the Christian—that the smallest trespasses were the cause of heartfelt lamentation and grief in those hours of secret retirement, when no eye but Jehovah's was witness to his sorrow. In his example, the young aspirant for fame might see an illustration of the wise man's maxim, "before honor is humility;" and that the surest path to an enduring reputation is found by "asking counsel of God," and "acknowledging him in all our ways." Faithfulness, either to the dead or the living, cannot, however, require that a very free use should be made of the record of what passed in the inward sanctuary of his soul—a record obviously designed for his private use only, and in characters intended to be illegible by every eye except his own. So much will, nevertheless, be inserted as is necessary to substantiate the representations in this narrative, or disclose important facts in his history, which could be learned from no other source.

Extracts from his Diary.

"*Feb.* 5, 1806. For this fortnight past I have enjoyed a tolerable share of assistance, but nothing transporting. Slow progress.

"*Feb.* 7. Little opportunity for prayer in the morning; yet God was pleased not wholly to desert me during the day, and, in the evening, favored me with clearer views of the glorious all-sufficiency of my Savior, and of my absolute need of him, than I have before experienced. I could, in some measure, feel that my deepest humiliation was rank pride, and all that I am or can do is sin. Yet, blessed be God, I can plead the sufferings and perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, in whom, though weak in myself, I am strong.

"*Feb.* 8. There is no vice, of which I do not see the seeds in myself, and which would bear fruit, did not grace prevent. Notwithstanding this, I am perpetually pulling the mote out of my brother's eye.

"*Feb.* 9. Was much favored in prayer, and still more in reading the Bible. Every word seemed to come home with power. Of late, I have none of those rapturous feelings which used to be so transporting; but I enjoy a more calm and equable degree of comfort; and, though slowly, yet surely, find myself advancing.

"*Feb.* 11. A very dull day—almost discouraged yet I hope the experience I gain of my utter inability to think so much as a good thought, will have a tendency to mortify pride.

"*Feb.* 15. Felt some liveliness in morning prayer, and some aspirations after greater measures of holiness. Resolved to observe this as a day of fasting and prayer. After seeking divine assistance, reflecting on the innumerable sins of which my life has been full, and on the great aggravations that enhance my guilt, I attempted, I hope sincerely, to give myself and all I possess to God, in the renewal of my covenant engagements.

"*Feb.* 16. Very dull and lifeless in the morning. Made a resolution to restrain my temper, and the next moment broke it. Felt more lively at meeting. In the afternoon and evening was remarkably favored. I felt such an overwhelming sense of God's amazing goodness and my own unworthiness as I never had before. It gave me a most earnest desire to spend and be spent in the service of God, in any way he should please to employ me.

"*Feb.* 17. In the morning, felt strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; thought I could stand all enemies, but soon was as lifeless as ever. When shall I learn that all my sufficiency is of God!

"*Feb.* 19. What a poor, weak, unstable creature I am, when Christ is absent! Read Baxter's Saints' Rest; but, though it is very affectingly written, I was totally unmoved by it.

"*Feb.* 22. This is a day to be remembered. I determined to spend it in fasting and prayer, but was prevented. In the afternoon received an invitation to spend the evening with ——, ——, &c. but, thanks to divine goodness, was enabled to decline it. I tasted much sweetness in the former part of the evening; but in the latter part I was favored with such displays of divine goodness as almost forced me to exclaim, Lord, stay thine hand!

"*Feb.* 23. Was again favored with the divine presence. I have some expectation of a heavy stroke impending. If it is so, God's will be done.

"*Feb.* 24. A great falling off from the enjoyments and life of yesterday; yet, blessed be God, I am not wholly deserted. I was much favored in speaking to the scholars, and they seemed rather more affected than common. But I have suffered much to-day from the attacks of spiritual pride. This, I already see, will be the enemy against which my efforts must be directed, and which will cost me most conflicts. But I trust in an almighty arm.

"*Feb.* 26. I drag along without advancing. O, how disproportionate are my endeavors to the mighty prize for which I contend!

"*Feb.* 28. Resolved to spend this day in fasting and prayer. Did so, but found no relief. Was astonishingly dead and wandering. In reading Mr. Brainerd's life, I seemed to feel a most ardent desire after some portion of his spirit; but, when I attempted to pray, it vanished. I could not even mourn over my coldness.

"*March* 3. In the evening, partly by my own fault, and partly by accident, got entangled in vain company. Afterwards was in most exquisite distress of mind. Had a clearer view of my own sinfulness and vileness than ever.

"*March* 4. I seem rather to go back than to advance. What a display of divine power, to make a saint of such a wretch as I!

"*March* 6. My time flies like a vapor, and nothing is done. When shall I begin to live for God!

"*March* 8. I cannot accuse myself of indulging in any known sin, or neglecting any known duty; but I am so lifeless, so little engaged in religious things, that I seem to believe as though I believed not.

"*March* 10. Found considerable freedom in prayer. Was too passionate in a dispute about a theatre. Had little freedom in speaking to the scholars. Was enabled to be diligent in filling up my time. Was assisted in my studies.

"*March* 12. I act as if eternal things were a dream. When shall I be wise!

"*March* 13. Favored with great liberty in prayer. Was enabled to pray for others more than usual.

"*March* 17. Thanks to divine goodness, this has been a good day to me. Was favored with considerable freedom in the morning, and rejoiced in the Lord through the day; but in the evening felt an unusual degree of assistance both in prayer and study. SINCE I BEGAN TO BEG GOD'S BLESSING ON MY STUDIES, I HAVE DONE MORE IN ONE WEEK THAN IN THE WHOLE YEAR BEFORE. Surely, it is good to draw near to God at all times.

"*March* 19. Less freedom in prayer than usual. In the evening, was betrayed into folly, if not into sin. Could neither write nor read with any profit. What a miserable creature am I when Jesus withdraws his assistance! Was very positive in a trifle, and was justly punished by finding myself in the wrong. Hope it will prove a profitable lesson to me.

"*March* 23. Am much exercised respecting applying for license to preach, and afraid I am under the influence of improper motives; but I trust my Guide will direct me.

"*March* 28. Read Pike's Saving Faith; and, though at first I was somewhat alarmed with fears that I had it not, yet, blessed be God, my fears and doubts were soon removed. I was enabled to appeal to God for a witness of what he has done for me. I know that I love my Savior; and, though my love is infinitely short of his merits, I trust He who gave it me can and will increase it. I am *sinful*, but He died for sinners Felt unusual fervency and sweetness in prayer and reading the Scriptures, and was encouraged to go on striving for more holiness.

"*March* 29. Renewed my covenant with God Asked assistance to do it with sincerity. My prayer was answered in an unusual degree. I had a clearer view of my own vileness and depravity, and a more distinct and satisfying perception of Christ's all-sufficiency and goodness, by far, than I ever enjoyed before; so that I was ready to think I had never known any thing of the matter. Was enabled to say, *Abba, Father!* in the true spirit of adoption, and to exercise strong faith in Christ, and love to him.

"*March* 30. Had more comfort in ordinances than ever before. I was almost ready to think this the period of my conversion. The transport I felt was more rational and penetrating than I ever before experienced. It arose from an apprehension of the perfect sufficiency of Christ in all his offices, and from a clear discovery of God as my Father, so that I was enabled to trust rejoice, and exult in him.

"*April* 2. Was enabled in some measure to guard against a peevish, impatient disposition. In the evening, unusually lively and fervent in prayer.

"*April* 5. Was very much harassed with wandering thoughts this morning. Sought to Christ for deliverance, and found it. .....Have fresh reason to think visiting is detrimental. In the evening was exceedingly depressed with a sense of my vileness. I wished to shrink from society and observation. Could hardly think of attempting to preach. Threw myself at the feet of my blessed Savior, and poured forth my sorrows and complaints before him. Yet I suspect there was more of self than any other principle in my tears.

"*April* 8. Was much exercised to-day, on the subject of election, and other truths connected with it. Have been much in doubt respecting offering myself for examination next month. Fear I am not under the influence of proper motives.

"*April* 13. Sabbath. Felt the love of God sweetly shed abroad in my heart. Continued in this frame all the morning. Derived much more advantage from ordinances than usual, especially from the sacrament A profitable day.

"*April* 20. Had some sense of my miserable state, but little fervency in seeking relief. Suspect the weather and my health have some influence on me. In the evening had more fervency, but not more sensible assistance. Was, however, resigned to my Master's will, and enabled to trust in him.

"*April* 26. Was much favored in my approaches to the throne of grace to-day.

"*May* 1. Rose early, and had some life and comfort. Have been so much engaged in preparing my sermon for examination, that my mind has been much taken off from religion. I find writing sermons is not praying.

"*May* 4. It is now long since I have enjoyed any of those sweet seasons of communion with God which used to be my chief happiness. I fear I have neglected the Scriptures too much. Am determined to pay more attention to them.

"*May* 13. This was the day in which I intended to be examined before the Association, but it pleased Providence to prevent. In the evening reflected on my late coldness and backwardness in religion, and resolved, by the help of divine grace, to run with more alacrity the race set before me.

"*May* 18. I think I never was so favored in prayer for so long a period in my life. At meeting, tolerably lively. In the intermission, and after meeting, was enabled to spend the time profitably, so that I never was favored with a more profitable Sabbath.

"*May* 19. Enjoyed considerable fervor in the morning, and some life in speaking to my scholars. Engaged in a dispute at breakfast, and foolishly became angry. Retired and prayed for him with whom I was angry, and for myself. Was enabled, in a considerable degree, to conquer my anger in this matter.

"*May* 20. Find some remains of anger, notwithstanding all my endeavors to suppress it.

"*May* 22. Since I began, in pursuance of my design, to read the Scriptures, I have enjoyed more of the divine presence than before.

"*May* 23. Was favored in prayer. Was applied to by the selectmen to deliver an oration on the 4th of July. Refused at first; but, being persuaded to consider of it, pride and vanity prevailed, and I foolishly complied.—*Mem.* Never to consider, when I have a presentiment, at first, what I ought to do.

"*Sabbath, June* 1. Communion. Enjoyed much of the divine presence and assistance in prayer and meditation. Have never had a more profitable morning. Found my Savior in his ordinances. Hope I have found this a good day. Seemed to feel more property in Christ and his benefits than I had ever done before. After meeting was filled with the blessed consolations of the Spirit. O, how refreshing are those foretastes of heaven! How ravishing the presence of Jesus! Felt a full assurance of my interest in the blessings purchased by Christ. No doubts obscured the sunshine of my mind. God be praised.

"*June* 9. Resolved to spend all the time before six in religious exercises. Enjoyed some comfort in prayer.

"*June* 15. Sabbath. Never felt such strong and lively faith in prayer as this morning. It seemed as if I had nothing to do but to take whatever I pleased.

"*June* 17. Was much harassed with wandering thoughts in morning prayer. Was much assisted in my studies.

"*June* 28. Felt myself exceedingly vile. Found no comfort in the exercises of public worship. My oration is a snare to me. O, what an astonishing, bewitching power a thirst for applause has over my mind! I know it is of no consequence what mankind think of me, and yet I am continually seeking their approbation.

"*June* 29. Sabbath. Rose early, and was favored with the presence and assistance of the blessed Spirit in prayer. O, how sweet and refreshing it is to pour out our souls before God! O, the wonderful and unmerited goodness of God, in keeping me from openly disgracing my profession! If he had left me one moment to myself, I had been ruined. Next Sabbath is the communion. God grant that it may be a refreshing season to me, and many others.

"*July* 2. Still harassed and perplexed about my oration. Could not have believed that the desire of applause had gained such power over me.

"*July* 4. Was enabled to ask for assistance to perform the services of the day. In the evening, felt in a most sweet, humble, thankful frame. How shall I praise the Lord for all his goodness!

"*July* 5. Felt much of the same temper I experienced yesterday. In the evening was favored with much of the divine presence and blessing in prayer — *Mem.* Applause cannot confer happiness.

"*July* 6. Sabbath. My infinitely gracious God is still present, to make his goodness pass before me. He has been with me this morning in prayer, and enabled me sweetly to say, *My Father, my God.* At the Lord's supper my gracious Savior favored me with some tokens of his presence. O that I could find words to express half his goodness, or my own vileness! I hope my faith received some increase. But what I desire to praise my God for, is his wonderful goodness in assisting me against pride.

"*July* 7. Still favored with the smiles of my blessed Lord. Surely his loving-kindness is better than life. How condescendingly kind! I hope he is teaching me the value of worldly applause, and how incompetent it is to afford happiness. I have had enough to satisfy me, if there were any satisfaction in it. But happiness is to be found in God alone.

'*July* 18. Very little comfort in prayer. Have fallen into a sad, lifeless state the week past. Hope it will convince me more strongly than ever of my weakness and vileness. Sat up till 2 o'clock at night, talking with Mr. ———— on religious topics. Found he had more to say in defence of Unitarianism than I could have supposed.

"*July* 24. No life at all. O that it were with me as in months past!—In the evening was favored with more of the divine presence than I have enjoyed this fortnight.

"*July* 25. Spent the day, according to previous resolution, in fasting and prayer. Was favored with much of the divine presence and blessing, so that it was a comfortable and profitable day to me. Called to mind the events of my past life, the mercies I have received, and the ill returns I have made for them. Felt a deep sense of my own unworthiness, and the unmerited goodness of God.

"*July* 27. Was alarmed with respect to my state by reading Edwards on the Affections; but obtained comfort and assurance by prayer.

"*Aug*. 2. Was much engaged in prayer, and thought I was humbled under a sense of sin. Was enabled to plead with some earnestness for spiritual blessings. But afterwards, reading an account of the conversion of some persons, I was led to doubt whether I had ever known what it meant, and was much distressed.

"*Aug.* 3. Was again disturbed with apprehensions that I knew nothing of religion; but, though I could not come to Christ as one of his members, I threw myself down before him, as a sinner who needed his mediation, and my doubts vanished.

"*Aug.* 4. Rose with the impression that all I had formerly experienced was a delusion, and that I was still an enemy to God. Was enabled to go to Jesus, and plead earnestly for mercy, not for my own sake, but for his. I seemed determined, if I must perish, to perish at his feet; but perhaps I was deceived. However, my hopes began to revive. In the evening foolishly went into company, and had no time for prayer.

"*Aug.* 16. Seemed to be something more alive to divine things this morning. Found some sweetness in prayer and reading the Scriptures. In the evening, was much assisted in preparation for the communion to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV.

Retires to Rindge, and devotes himself exclusively to his preparation for the ministry.

In the month of August, 1806, Mr. Payson relinquished his charge of the Academy in Portland; and, 'after settling his business, went on board a packet for

Boston," in which he remained several days, "tossed about by contrary winds, and wounded by the oaths and blasphemies of the wretches on board." He has described "a set" of his fellow-passengers by two words, indicative of all that is revolting to modesty and pious feeling, and suited to "vex the righteous soul;" the bare mention of which would cause others to join him in the exclamation—"How dreadful to spend an eternity among such wretches!" On the fifth day from his embarkation the vessel "arrived in Boston in a violent gale of wind, attended with some danger." He tarried in the neighborhood till after commencement, and, notwithstanding the "noise and confusion, found more pleasure than he had expected in meeting his classmates." On his way from Cambridge to Rindge, he *rode* as far as Groton; but whether the stage rested there over night, or took a different route, and his desire to tread again the threshold of his beloved home alone urged him forward—so it was, that he left the stage, and "*walked* home from Groton after six" in the evening, and was at his journey's end "about four the next morning," ready to "receive the congratulations of his friends." His father's house continued, from this time, to be his hallowed and chosen retirement, till he entered on the active duties of the ministry.

"Wisdom's self
"Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude;
"Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
"She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings."

This step, considered in all its aspects, may justly be regarded as one of the most important in Mr. Payson's life, and reflects the highest honor on his judgment and good sense. Four months previously to this time, as has been seen in the preceding pages, he seriously contemplated making application for license to preach the Gospel. Whatever were the cause that prevented him, a gracious Providence is visible in it; not that he was particularly deficient in sacred learning, on the contrary, his theological knowledge was probably equal to that of most "candidates." Among the works which he is known to have read with care, might be named Watson's Tracts, Witsius, Stackhouse, Jonathan Edwards, besides many works of devotion and practical divinity. Abstracts of several other treatises still exist in his hand-writing, which were made before he left Portland; also a collection of "Thoughts on the Composition and Delivery of Sermons." Still, during all this time, he was invested with a public trust of no light responsibility. His school must have mainly engrossed his time, his thoughts, and his cares. To suppose that his professional studies were allowed more than a secondary claim to his attention, were to suppose him unfaithful to an important charge, which he had voluntarily assumed. And though he could hardly have been other than a distinguished preacher, even had he entered on the sacred office without further preparation, yet he would not have been the minister he afterwards was. This season of retirement has an intimate connection with his subsequent eminence and usefulness. To the occupations of these days of seclusion from the world, more than to any other means, may be traced his gigantic "growth in the knowledge of God," and that extraordinary unction which attended his performance of official duties.

This period of his history is memorable, and highly instructive to the student of theology. Having, after much deliberation and prayer, chosen the ministry of reconciliation as the business of his future life, he gave himself up to the work of preparation with an exclusiveness and ardor perhaps never exceeded. From every study and pursuit, whatever its charms and attractions, which was not directly subsidiary to his grand design, he resolutely divorced himself—at least till he had acquired the art—analogous to the supposed properties of the philosopher's stone—"of turning all to gold." He seems to have concentrated and directed all his powers to the acquisition of scriptural knowledge and the cultivation of Christian and ministerial graces in obedience to the apostolical precept, "give thyself wholly to them." A decision, once formed, was with him usually final; and, in executing his purpose, "whatever his hand found to do, he did it with his might." These, his permanent characteristics, were eminently conspicuous at this period, while learning to

> "Negotiate between God and man,
> "As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
> "Of judgment and of mercy."

With the most exalted views of the holy office to which he was looking forward, and of the qualifications requisite to its competent and successful execution, he sought them with a proportionate zeal, devoting himself to the study of the sacred pages, if man ever did, "with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and mind."

Systems of divinity, as drawn up by men, Mr. Payson seems always to have regarded as subordinate to the word of God. It was not his habit to decry them as useless; but he regarded them with a watchful jealou sy, and felt it unsafe to trust to them, as his practice evidently demonstrates. He found "a more excellent way" to the knowledge of his Master's will, by consulting directly "the law and the testimony." Thus to honor the "lively oracles" is the wisest and safest course for every man; for to embrace a system, with the intention of retaining or rejecting it, either wholly or in part, as it shall afterwards be found to agree, or not, with Scripture, is to incur the hazard of perpetuating error—since a man's theory is more likely to modify his views of the Scriptures, than the Scriptures are to correct the mistakes of his theory. This every one may have observed in regard to those whose sentiments differ from his own. Before this time, indeed, the works of the most eminent divines of our own and other countries, which were then accessible, and which he is known to have read, had doubtless exerted some influence in forming his religious opinions; but he was obviously wedded to none. To none did he feel the attachment of a partisan; he had not arrived to that state of mind which made him feel interested to defend an opinion because any human *master had said it.* The polluting and disorganizing tendency of loose opinions on the one hand, and the scarcely less deplorable effects of dogmatism on the other, which could not have escaped his observation, not less than the spirit of religion and his constitutional independence of mind, conspired to lead him to a just estimate of the value of human authority in matters of religious belief, and to consummate his reverence for the "sure word of prophecy," and his confidence in revelation, as an adequate foundation for his faith, and an infallible guide in duty.

"Here is firm footing—all is sea besides."

Most men, however discordant their principles, profess to have derived them from the Scriptures; but, with Mr. P. this was something more than pretence. The Bible was with him the subject of close, critical, persevering, and, for a time, almost exclusive attention, his reading being principally confined to such writings as would assist in its elucidation, and unfold its literal meaning. *In this manner he studied the whole of the Inspired Volume, from beginning to end, so that there was not a verse on which he had not formed an opinion.* This is not asserted at random. It is but a few years since, that, in conversation with a candidate for the ministry, he earnestly recommended very particular and daily attention to the study of the Scriptures, and enforced his counsel by his own experience of the advantages which would accrue from the practice. He observed, that before he commenced preaching, he made it his great object to know what the Bible taught on every subject, and, with this purpose, investigated every sentence in it so far as to be able "to give an answer to every man who should ask a reason for it."*

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* It is not here alledged that Dr. Payson comprehended all that is contained in the Scriptures, much less that he arrogated to himself such knowledge; for, though "the word of Christ dwelt richly" in him, he doubtless continued to "increase in the knowledge of God" by every perusal of it, how often soever repeated, till the last, and even then saw as through a glass, darkly, compared with the visions of heaven. Some truths cannot be fully comprehended, and may have various relations which never will be known on earth. Many things respecting unfulfilled predictions can be known by no man till after their accomplishment. But he had made every passage a distinct object of attention, and, if "hard to be understood,'

In this way he acquired his unparalleled readiness to meet every question, on every occasion, whether proposed by a caviller or a conscientious inquirer; which, it is well known, he usually did in a manner as satisfactory as it often was unexpected. The advantages hence derived were, in his view, beyond all computation. It secured for him the unlimited confidence of people in the common walks of life, as "a man mighty in the Scriptures." It gave him great influence with Christians of other denominations. It enabled him to confound and silence gainsayers, when they could not be convinced, as well as to build up the elect of God on their most holy faith. It furnished him, too, with ten thousand forms of illustration, or modes of conveying to ordinary minds the less obvious truths with which he was conversant in the exercise of his ministry. He believed "all Scripture to be given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness;" and he was himself a most striking exemplification of its competency to render "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

Of Mr. Payson's devotion to the Scriptures there is evidence of a different nature from that which has just been given. Among his papers has been found a small manuscript volume, containing "Notes" on most of the books of Scripture. It is among the few interesting relics of this period of his life. The manuscript

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he could state to the inquirer the causes of the obscurity, and in the very fact find a powerful motive to humility, diligence, and prayer for divine illumination, thus rendering the darkest texts "profitable."

ends with remarks on 1 John, 5:8. Whether they were continued, in another volume, to the end of Revelation, does not appear. These notes are short in themselves, and much abbreviated in the form of expression, but bear marks of a kind and extent of investigation highly creditable to his learning and judgment, as well as to his diligence and fidelity. Discrepancies are accounted for and reconciled; figures are explained; chronology, philosophy, topography, natural history, ancient languages, are made to contribute to the elucidation of Scripture. Against prophecies which have received their completion, are found references to the historical characters and events by which they are supposed to have been fulfilled. It is difficult to characterize these notes by any general term, except that they are exegetical, in distinction from practical and experimental. Those on the New Testament are professedly collated, in part; and though the same should, on examination, be found true of the rest, the manuscript is evidence of his careful study of the Scriptures; and for this purpose it was introduced to notice.

To learn more fully Mr. Payson's estimate of the Scriptures, the reader should peruse, in this connection, his sermon, entitled, "The Bible above all Price."* In that discourse the preacher is much at home; he treads on ground where he delighted to linger. He explores a field with whose riches and beauties he was familiar. He clusters together its excellencies with a dexterous and bountiful hand, and describes its efficacy like one who "spoke that which he knew, and testified that which he had seen." His familiarity with the Scriptures was strikingly apparent in his pulpit addresses generally ; not so much by long quotations as by their general spirit, and the sacred associations he was continually awakening. They bore prominent traces of the divine model he so faithfully studied, not in matter only, but in the manner of exhibiting it,—so plain, that his hearers could not but see it,—enforced by considerations so reasonable and moving, that they must feel self-condemned for rejecting it. They were not the cold abstractions of a speculative mind, but the doctrines which are according to godliness, clothed in the fervid language which affection dictates. They were not truths merely, but truths uttered by one who had felt their power and experienced their consolations, under the influence of that Spirit, who, to use his own expressive language, "lives and speaks in every line."

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* Tract No. 71, of the American Tract Society.

But there is another part of his example more difficult to imitate than the one just sketched. He *prayed without ceasing*. Aware of the aberrations to which the human mind is liable, he most earnestly sought the guidance and control of the Holy Spirit. He felt safe no where but near the throne of grace. He may be said to have studied theology on his knees. Much of his time he spent literally prostrated, with the Bible open before him, pleading the promises—"I will send the Comforter—and when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." He was especially jealous of his own heart, and, to conquer its evil propensities, subjected his body as well as his mind to the severest discipline. No man ever strove harder to "mortify the flesh, with the affections and lusts." It is almost incredible what abstinence and self-denial he voluntarily underwent, and what tasks he imposed on himself, that he might "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." He allowed himself only a small part of the twenty-four hours for sleep;* and his seasons of fasting were injuriously frequent. So far did he carry his abstinence from food, that his family were alarmed for his safety. Often has his mother, whom he most tenderly loved and reverenced, and whose wishes were law to him, in every thing besides his religious principles and intercourse with his Maker—in every thing, in short, which did not bind the conscience—often has his mother, or a favorite sister, stood at the door of his chamber, with a little milk, or some other refreshment equally simple, pleading in vain for admission.

The expediency or duty of such severe mortification turns on the question of its necessity to the attainment of the object for which in this instance, it was practiced. If the subjection of the heart and mind, with all their powers, to Christ, could not otherwise be effected, he was unquestionably right; for no sacrifice or suffering which is requisite to this can be too great. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off; if thine eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out." It is moreover true, that the most eminent saints of ancient and later times have devoted frequent seasons to private fasting and prayer; and the practice may, therefore, be ranked among the essential means of rapid and extensive growth in grace. It were well for individuals, it were well for the church, if the practice should revive, and become common.* So far from weakening the charities of life, or diminishing the amount of active, social duties, it would greatly enhance them. We should witness a more vigorous and determined piety, a more diffusive and efficient benevolence.

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*The following division and appropriation of his time was entered in his diary about five weeks after his return to his father's:

"*Oct.* 5. Resolved to devote, in future, *twelve* hours to study *two* to devotion; *two* to relaxation; *two* to meals and family devotions; and *six* to sleep." But this did not long satisfy him. His rigid notions of duty led him to subtract two hours from the six devoted to sleep, and to multiply his seasons of fasting to a degree which the human system could not long have sustained. A *weekly* fast, however, was habitual with him, from this time till his last sickness.

Still the religion of Christ enjoins no needless austerities. It has at times called, and may again call, for the sacrifice of health, and life, and treasure; for the renunciation of friends and home, and all its endearments. But in ordinary circumstances, "Godliness is profitable unto all things—to the life that now is, as well as that which is to come." It did not re-

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There are some distinguished laborers in the vineyard of our Lord, who practice the essential duty here recommended, not so much by totally abstaining from food beyond the accustomed intervals, as by "denying themselves" at every meal, and using a spare and simple diet at all times,—a course well adapted to preserve both mind and body in the best condition for biblical research and devotional exercises. This modification of the duty was much practiced by Mr. Payson, and strongly recommended by him to the members of his church. He would have them, when fasting on their own private account, not "appear unto men to fast:" but to come to the table, which was spread for their families with a cheerful countenance, and partake sparingly of its provisions.

quire injurious excess of abstinence and mortification in one situated as Mr. Payson was. He afterwards saw his error—not in fasting, but in fasting so long—and lamented it. In this matter his mother was the wiser counselor. What she feared came upon him; the unhappy consequences to his health were felt, it is believed, to his dying day.

The truth is, Mr. Payson never did any thing by halves. Whatever were the objects immediately before him, he was *totus in illis*, wholly engrossed with them. He was therefore particularly liable at this stage of his experience, glowing, as he did, with all the ardor of a first love, and panting for the honor of winning souls to Jesus, to give an undue intensity to the meaning of those passages which prescribed his personal duty. When he read the strong language of Paul—"mortify your members, that are upon the earth;" and contemplated his example—"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection;" and desired above all things to be another such champion of the cross; his susceptible and ardent mind might have imbibed views of duty which needed to be corrected by another remark of the same apostle—"bodily exercise profiteth little." When attended with the expectation, however latent, that it will purchase immunities, or merit heaven, so far from "profiting" at all, it vitiates the act, rendering it not only useless, but abominable. Such an expectation, however, was totally abhorrent to all Dr. Payson's views; and its existence in the faintest degree is not be supposed on any other principles than those which are common to men whose deceitful hearts practice innumerable impositions, unsuspected by their possessors.

If "he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he who taketh a city," the rigid discipline and government to which Mr. Payson subjected the passions of the mind and the appetites of the body, afford the most conclusive proof of his real greatness, as well as of his decision and energy of character, and of his unshaken adherence to his purposes. Ignorance and prejudice, under a show of superior discernment, will see in this conduct the future "pope;" for prejudice, like malice, will remain blind to one important fact, which should never be lost sight of in estimating Mr. Payson's character. Except in things expressly enjoined in the Scriptures, he never, at this time or afterwards, made his own practice a law for others. If he "bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne," he did not "lay them on other men's shoulders," but made his own bear their oppressive weight. He urged self-denial, prayer, and fasting, indeed, as he was obliged by the authority under which he acted; but left the measure and degree to the decision of each man's conscience. He knew more than others of the strength of depravity in his own heart, and supposed he had need of severe measures to subdue it; that it was of a "kind," of which he could not be dispossessed "but by prayer and fasting." He rightly judged, too, that a minister of the meek and self-denying Jesus needed a more than ordinary share of humility and self-government, to be separated farther from the contaminations of the world than other men, and to have the habitual state of his affections more heavenly. Moreover, he had an overwhelming sense of ministerial responsibility, and looked forward to the office, not without hope indeed, but yet trembling for the results. Why then should he not learn to "en dure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ?" And yet thousands of nominal Christians will censure this severe regimen as criminal, by whom he would have been suffered to escape without animadversion, had he indulged in an occasional surfeit, and mingled in parties of pleasure.

But who can say that he was not moved by an influence which it would have been sinful to resist, at least till he had reached that limit, beyond which perseverance was excess? That God, who sees the end from the beginning, fits his instruments for the peculiar service which he is preparing for them. A great and arduous work was appointed for Mr. Payson, as the event proved. And for that kind of preparation, which consists in fasting and communion with God, he had the high example of the Jewish lawgiver, and of One greater than Moses. Thus did Christ, our exemplar, previous to entering on his public ministry; and also when from among his disciples he "chose twelve, whom he named apostles." Thus did the apostles, after Christ's ascension, whenever they were called to set apart a brother to the work of the ministry.

In this, however, and other duties, the time, manner, and extent of which are left undetermined by the express statutes of Christ's kingdom, it is safer to act according to our convictions of duty, for the time being, than to make these convictions our unchangeable rule of conduct for future time. It is a wise direction, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God." In binding ourselves by vows to any course of conduct, regard should be had to our circumstances as social beings, dependent on one another, as well as on the Author of our existence. No man, perhaps, ever reached any high degree of eminence, who did not form purposes and resolutions, and adhere to them, when formed, with some degree of constancy. There are obvious advantages in having our general course marked out before us—in prosecuting our various duties by system, and not at random. But when we descend to details, and assign, beforehand, to every hour of the day its employment, or oblige ourselves to fill up a given number of hours with a particular pursuit, we should not overlook the limits of human ability, nor the thousand changes which may take place in our circumstances, and in our relations with those beings among whom God has placed us. In consequence of such changes, other duties may have a paramount claim to those very hours; and if our resolutions are formed without an eye to such contingencies, they may prove a snare to us. Disappointments will be unavoidable; vexation and discouragement will ensue. It is not to be presumed that Mr. Payson formed his purposes without reference to the vicissitudes of the human condition. Still, his chagrin on failing sometimes to accomplish them, affords reason to think that he might have been too sanguine. It is a little remarkable, that the next day after he had sketched the plan for his future daily employment, unforeseen events necessarily prevented his executing it.

" *Oct.* 6. In great confusion this morning—sister sick—father going a journey—little time for prayer. Was so much hindered in various ways that I did not fulfill my *twelve hours*."

From causes equally beyond his control he often failed of accomplishing all that he prescribed to himself. Such were, nevertheless, his most laborious days. When hindered and diverted from his object he would goad himself onward to extraordinary exertion; and when successful in executing his plan, his satisfaction was exquisite.

The influence of habitual prayer upon his studies was so certain and so operative, that the strength of his devotion seems, for the most part, to have been the measure of his progress. By his very near approach to the *Father of lights*, his mind received, as it were, the direct beams of the Eternal Fountain of illumination. In the light of these beams the truths of religion were distinctly perceived, and their relations readily traced. These irradiations from the throne of God not only contributed to the clearness of his perceptions, but imparted a kind of seraphic energy and quickness to his mental operations. From them he derived, not light only, but heat. Few requests were urged by him more constantly and earnestly than his petitions for assistance in study; and not unfrequently he records results similar to the following:—"Was much assisted in my studies this evening, so that, notwithstanding I was interrupted, I was enabled to write twelve pages of my sermon. It was the more precious, because it seemed to be in answer to prayer." Those who would esteem such an "evening's work" as too insignificant to be noticed with special gratitude, should know that he had now been only part of a month in his retirement. Three days later he writes —"Was most remarkably assisted in study, so that I wrote three-fourths of a sermon." And on the other hand, there are entries of a different character. One may serve as a specimen.

"*Sept.* 23. Was quite dull and lifeless in prayer, and, in consequence, had no success in study."

Sometimes even his "lively," fervent prayers were not followed by immediate returns; but when the answer was granted, it brought with it a rich compensation for the extreme perplexity and distress which the delay occasioned him:

"*March* 4. Was entirely discouraged respecting my studies, and almost determined to give up in despair. But see the goodness of God! He enabled me to write a whole sermon, besides reading a great deal; and in the evening was pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon me. O how refreshing, strengthening, and animating are his smiles! How ravishing the contemplation of his holiness, love, wisdom, power and goodness! He seemed to be a boundless ocean of love; and the sight caused my heart to expand with love to him and all his creatures. O how trifling do earthly beauties appear when he is pleased to unveil his face, and give a glimpse of heaven! His holiness is the chief glory of his nature."

But in nothing was his progress more rapid than in self-knowledge. *Here*—whether success or disappointment crowned his other pursuits—he was continually extending his discoveries. To those who are ignorant of "the plague of their own heart," his confessions of sin must appear extravagant, and his description of his heart a picture having no original, save in an apostate spirit. He calls it "a compound of every thing bad." He likens it to "the bottomless pit; out of it—as soon as the door, with which the Holy Spirit covers it, is opened by his absence—a thick, noisome smoke arises, with a tribe of hellish locusts, that devour the tender plants of grace, and bring on a darkness which may be felt." Now, he is "crushed into the very dust by the recollection of the sins of his youth;"—now, "filled with distressing feelings, and loses all hope that he shall ever be fit to preach;" while these very feelings he attributes to a criminal cause, as, "disappointed pride, and a conscious inferiority to others." At another time he is "brought into temptations, which show his inward corruptions, against which he had been praying," or which he had not before suspected in himself. Again, if he "attempts to approach the throne of grace, whole floods of evil imaginations carry him away! so that he is fain to have recourse to unthought-of methods to get rid of them." And, not to prolong the enumeration, he is oppressed with "such a sense of his insignificance and vileness, that it seemed as if he should never open his mouth any more, to boast, complain, or censure."

Still, his religion differed as widely from that of the mere ascetic, as Christian charity differs from selfishness. Its fruits demonstrate the genuineness of the stock. His first care was, indeed, to have his own "heart right with God;" but he was, at the same time, fertile in good devices, and prompt to execute them. To his mother, under domestic trials, the nature of which, though not indicated, appears to have caused her bitterness of soul, he was eminently "a son of consolation." To other members of the family he strove to be useful. The eye that could penetrate the walls of his chamber, might have seen him conducting a younger brother to the throne of grace, kneeling with him before the mercy-seat, and interceding with

God for his salvation. He encountered a journey for the express purpose of visiting an early friend, of whose piety he had once some hope, but who, he feared, had now become indifferent to the one thing needful—that he might know his state, and encourage him o seek that good part which could not be taken from him. And so much were his benevolent feelings drawn forth towards the inhabitants of his native town, that he spared no suitable exertions for their spiritual good. A revival of religion among them was the subject of fervent prayer; and in the same object he endeavored to enlist other Christians. He procured, through the agency of his mother, the institution of a weekly meeting of female members of the church, for united prayer that the work of God might be revived. In short, so far was he from being bound up in self, that he exerted himself for the good of others in such ways as were proper for one in a state of pupilage.

Even in the most distressing parts of his experience there are discoverable those characteristics which distinguish it from the torturing convictions of the unrenewed soul. If he is in "a sullen, stupid frame," it is not without "some melting desires after God." If he is well nigh "overcome by temptation," it is that he may "rejoice the more at his deliverance, when God gives him the victory." If he is "discouraged because of the difficulties of the way, and the small progress which he makes," just as "all hope seems departing, the fire burns within him." Uniformly, his war is with himself, and not with his God. And if to *prevent the night-watches, that he might meditate in God's word;* if to *love the habitation of his house, and the place where his honor dwelleth;* if to account himself and all things else *as nothing for Christ's sake;* if to *know in whom he has believed*, and to draw near to him *in full assurance of faith;* if to be *satisfied as with marrow and fatness, while remembering God and meditating on him in the night-watches;* if to *prevent the dawning of the morning by the cries of prayer;* if to *prefer Jerusalem above one's chief joy*—are scriptural marks of piety; then is his placed beyond suspicion. All these, and more, will be recognised in the extracts from his journal, with which this chapter concludes.

"*Sept.* 29. Had a most transporting view of God's glory as consisting in pure holiness. I rejoiced greatly that he reigned, and could exalt his own glory. Henceforth I will not doubt of my character; for I know, yea, assuredly know, that I love God my Savior, and holiness.

"*Oct.* 19. Sabbath. Rose with thoughts of God on my mind. Was exceedingly assisted in secret and in family prayer. Never had my desires and affections so much drawn out after God and holiness. Was filled with the gracious influences of the Spirit, so that I rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Never did earth appear so small, heaven so desirable, the Savior so precious, holiness so lovely, God so glorious, as now. In reading the Scriptures, they seemed to open with a clearness and force which delighted and astonished me. Such a sweet, calm, soul-satisfying joy I never felt before in so great a degree. Nothing on earth seemed worth a serious thought, but to glorify God. Had much of the same temper through the day. Was more assisted at meeting than ever before. In the evening had a clearer sense of the evil of sin, a greater hatred of it, and more fixed resolutions against it than ever. This has been by far the most profitable and blessed day to my soul that I ever experienced. God be praised!

" *Oct.* 25. Was much depressed with a view of the numerous enemies which oppose my journey heavenward. Had a faint glimpse of Christ, as able to carry me through in spite of all. Never before had such a clear idea of the passage—*If the righteous scarcely are saved.* Seemed to be plunged in a bottomless ocean of sin and corruption, from which no efforts of my own could free me.

" *Nov.* 2. Communion Sabbath. Blessed be God, who has caused his loving-kindness to appear. Enjoyed much assistance in family and secret prayer. Was enabled to drag my sins to Christ, beseeching him to slay them for me. Afterwards enjoyed great sweetness in meditation. Was preserved, in some measure, from wandering thoughts at meeting. Had a profitable, though not a very happy time, at communion. After meeting, was favored with considerable liberty in family and secret devotions.

" *Nov.* 10. Had petitioned, last night, that I might awake at a given hour; my petition was granted, and I was assisted in prayer. Felt my dependence on God for strength. Was surprisingly favored all day. Was in a sweet, humble frame. I admired and loved the work which Christ had wrought in my heart by his Spirit, just as I should have admired it in any other. My faith seemed to be unusually strong, able to grapple with any thing. I felt all day, that I depended entirely on Christ for the continuance of my strength.

" *Nov.* 18. After retiring to rest last night was favored with an extraordinary display of divine grace

I rejoiced that the Lord reigned; that Jesus was exalted far above principalities and powers. I was permitted to approach very near him, and to plead with much confidence and earnestness for myself and others. Waked several times in the night in the same frame. In the morning was favored with still clearer views, and more near access to my Saviour, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Could not find words to utter my praises for such goodness. Had, too, a most humiliating view of my own vile and odious nature.

" *Nov.* 19. My gracious God is still loading me with his unmerited goodness. His mercies follow each other, as wave follows wave, and the last seems ever the greatest This morning I seem to enjoy the happiness of heaven.

" *Nov.* 21. Resolved to spend this day in fasting and prayer for greater measures of grace, and assistance to render me more humble and concerned for God's glory; for more love to God and his people, and for ministerial qualifications. After seeking the divine presence, for which I was enabled to plead with great earnestness, and a feeling sense that I could do nothing without it, I endeavored to recollect and confess my sins. I saw myself exceedingly vile, seemed the chief of sinners, to be worse than the evil spirits, and thought that the lowest place in hell was my due. * * * * I felt the most ardent desire for God's glory, and was willing to be a stepping-stone, or any thing, however mean, to promote it. To be a fellow-laborer with Christ, in the glorious work of bringing souls to him, seemed to be the most delightful and honorable of all offices; and in this service I felt willing to spend and be spent; to suffer pain, contempt, and death itself. Felt a most intense love for Christ's people, and was willing to be below them all

"*Nov.* 26. As soon as I awoke, felt my soul go forth in longing after more holiness, and promised myself much comfort in prayer. But my Lord withdrew himself, and I could do nothing. Felt convinced that it was a dispensation of love for my good.

"*Nov.* 29. Never was enabled to plead with such earnestness and submission before. My mouth was filled with arguments, and I seemed to have both my Savior and the blessed Spirit go with me, and plead for me at the throne of grace. Was favored with a clear view of my Savior's beauty and holiness, and of the scheme of salvation by him. What a glorious design, and how worthy of its Author!

"*Dec.* 1. Favored with an uncommon spirit of prayer. Saw that, as a member of Christ, I might pray with as much certainty of being heard as Christ himself. Was enabled to plead his merits, sufferings, death, God's gracious promises, what he has already done for me, the operations of his own Spirit, and his own conduct in hearing others—as reasons why he should hear me. * * * Was graciously assisted in pleading, till I received an answer of peace. Was most sweetly melted with a view of the love of the blessed Trinity displayed in the work of redemption, and the vile, ungrateful returns I had made.

"*Dec.* 5. Felt a full persuasion that my present dark, comfortless state is only designed for good, to teach me humility, dependence, and weanedness from the world; and if it has this effect, I welcome it with joy.

"*Dec.* 6. All my proud and selfish feelings seemed to be annihilated. I saw and rejoiced that Jesus had no need of me, and that he would be praised by others, if not by me, to all eternity; and, provided he could be glorified, I cared not how, or by whom. How sweet to have pride and self subdued!

"*Dec.* 9. Determined to spend this day in fasting and prayer for myself and the advancement of religion in this place. Had great and special assistance last evening, and now, in pleading for the outpouring of the Spirit here, and for help in the duties before me. After thinking over my manifold transgressions, my sins against light and love, and confessing them—I attempted to plead my Savior's death and righteousness for pardon and reconciliation. I could not obtain it, but was for three hours in great perplexity and distress, and was more than once on the point of giving up in despair. However, I was enabled to continue reading the Scriptures and praying till afternoon, when the cloud dispersed, and my Savior shone out brighter than ever before. How did my soul rejoice, and plead for sanctifying grace! Was exhausted and worn out, but continued praying, or trying to pray, till night.

"*Dec.* 16. Was enabled to realize, for the first time in my life, what Christ suffered, and for what a wretch he suffered. Was so overwhelmed with the view, that I could not, for some time, shed a tear. O how hateful did sin appear!

"*Dec.* 17. Was much assisted in writing on Christ's passion.

"*Jan.* 4, 1807. Was favored with a spirit of prayer beyond all my former experience. I was in great agony, and wrestled both for myself and others with great power. God seemed to bow the heavens and come down, and open all his treasures, bidding me take what I would.

"*Jan.* 6. Was not favored with that sweet sense of pardon which I usually find on occasions of fasting: but I had a quiet, peaceful, resigned frame, and felt none of those repining thoughts which the absence of sensible comforts is apt to excite.

"*Jan.* 20. Was amazingly assisted in prayer for myself, parents, friends, and a revival of religion.

"*Jan.* 21. Was favored with the clearest views of the glory of heaven, *as consisting in holiness*, that I ever had.

"*Jan.* 29. Never felt such longings after God, or such a desire to depart and be with Christ. My soul thirsted for more full communion with my God and Savior. I do not now feel satisfied, as I used to, with the manifestations of the divine presence, but still feel hungry and craving.

"*Feb.* 2. Was amazingly given up to wandering imaginations. If I attempted to pray, in a moment my thoughts were in the ends of the earth. If I attempted to read the Bible, every verse, almost, afforded ground of doubt and caviling. This fully convinced me that Satan is able to make me doubt even the existence of God.

"*Feb.* 18. Was enabled to lie at Jesus' feet, and to wash them with the tears of contrition. No pleasure I have ever found in religion superior to this.

"*Feb.* 20. Resolved to spend the day in fasting, and had considerable assistance. Had clearer views of the majesty, purity, and holiness of God than usual, and this made me abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

"*Feb.* 28. Was favored with great enlargement in prayer. Seemed to be carried out of myself into the presence of God.

"*March* 2. Seem to be declining; and less grateful, less fervent, than I was, and have less tenderness of spirit. Yet I am less apt to think much of myself than I was, and hope I am growing in humility. This seems the most lovely grace, and most becoming sinners.

"*March* 7. Were it not for the promised help of my Savior, I would think no more of preaching, but rather labor for daily bread.

"*March* 12. Never appeared so exceedingly vile and loathsome to myself as I did this day. It seemed as if I could not endure to be near myself. No words could express any thing like the sense I had of my unworthiness. It seemed as if I could not, for shame, ask God to save me. I felt like sinking into the dust, in the idea that his pure eye was fixed upon me, and that saints and angels saw how vile I was.

"*March* 15. Sabbath. Rose very early, and was favored with sweet fervency and communion with God in prayer. Went to bed, and lay till morning. Enjoyed great liberty in prayer several times before meeting.

"*March* 17. Was favored with a peculiar experience this morning. I *thought* I knew that I could never heal myself before; but I was made to know it in a different manner now. I saw, with most convincing clearness, that neither I, nor all created beings, could do the least thing towards delivering me from my sinful nature. I saw that I depended entirely on the free mercy of God, and that there was no reason but his own good pleasure why he should ever afford me that assistance. Felt, for the first time in my life, what the apostle meant by "groanings which cannot be uttered;" and my desires after holiness were so strong, that I was in bodily pain, and my soul seemed as if it would burst the bands which confined it to the body.

"*March* 19. [At the close of a day of fasting and prayer.] I find that, even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. No days are so fatiguing as those which are spent in fervent and continual exercises of religion. *It will not be so in heaven.*

"*March* 26. Spent the day in fasting and prayer. Was favored with near access to my heavenly Father, and a realizing sense of his perfections. O how sweetly was I enabled to praise and admire his love and goodness in his works!

"*March* 31. Spent this day fasting, but not in prayer; for I could not put up a single petition. Was entirely deserted, and was ready to say, Surely it is in vain to seek after God. I could not see that I had advanced one step in holiness, and was ready to think I never should; yet could think of nothing else worth pursuing or living for. Doubted whether it were possible that I should know any thing of true religion, and yet be so entirely barren.

"*April* 7. In fasting and prayer, was favored with much of a spirit of supplication. I now seem to be lifted above those discouraging, desponding doubts, which have for some time clogged my soul. NO GOOD COMES OF DOUBTING, OR OF BROODING OVER OUR SINS.

"*April* 14. Spent this day in fasting and prayer Was wholly deserted, except that I saw more of my natural depravity, and the consequent pollution of all my duties, than ever before. Saw more, too, of the glory and greatness of the work of redemption than I had previously.

"*April* 22. Spent this day in fasting and prayer. At first was stupid; but soon God was pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon me, and visit me with his free Spirit. O how infinitely glorious and lovely did God in Christ appear! I saw, I felt, that God was mine, and I his, and was unspeakably happy. Now, if ever, I enjoyed communion with God. He shone sweetly upon me, and I reflected back his beams in fervent, admiring, adoring love. Had a most ravishing view of the glories of heaven, of the ineffable delight with which the Lord Jesus beholds the happiness which he has purchased with his own blood."

CHAPTER V.

His state of mind in the immediate prospect of the ministry.

THE time now drew near when Mr. Payson was to receive license to preach the Gospel. His spirituality appears to have increased as that interesting era of his life approached. Most sensibly did he feel that he "was no longer his own, but bought with a price," and "called by grace to serve God in the Gospel of his Son." "The world was crucified to him, and he to the world." His piety was distinguished by more frequent acts of self-dedication to God—not by short ejaculations and a general surrender merely, but with great deliberation, attended by a minute survey of the relations of the creature to the Creator, and of the obligations recognised and assumed by such a consecration. Happily, one specimen of the manner in which he gave himself up is preserved; and, though it describes the secret dealings of the soul with its God, it is hoped that it will not be desecrated by being brought out to the light. If, however, the reader never felt the awe which is created by a consciousness of the divine presence—if he never experienced the emotions of an ancient pilgrim, when, preparing for a similar transaction, he exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place!"—he is urgently requested to pause. If he is conscious of any other feelings than those of profound solemnity, let him leave this chapter unread. In it he will find nothing with which a mind given to levity, or vanity, or pride, can possibly sympathize. If he ventures to proceed, he will be met at the threshold, if not by "a drawn sword in the hand of the Captain of the Lord's host," by that which is scarcely less appalling to an earthly mind, and which will render almost equally appropriate the order addressed to Israel's leader—"Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy."

"*May* 1, 1807. Having set apart this day for fasting and prayer, preparatory to the celebration of the Lord's supper, I rose early, and sought the divine presence and blessing, in which I was favored with fervency and freedom. My petition was, that I might be enabled to see my own character, contrasted with the purity of God, and his holy, just, and good law that I might be assisted in renewing covenant with God, and in giving myself up to him, and that I might be favored with ministerial qualifications. After this, I drew up the following

CONFESSION AND FORM OF COVENANT.

"O thou High and Holy One, that inhabitest eternity, whose name alone is Jehovah,—who art the one, great, eternal, ever-blessed God, before whom angels bow and devils tremble, and in whose sight all the nations of the earth are less than nothing and vanity!—wilt thou graciously condescend, in thy sovereign and infinite goodness, to look down from thy throne of glory on me, the most unworthy of thy creatures, a poor, weak, sinful, vile, and polluted wretch, to behold me with mercy and compassion, and permit me, lying prostrate in the dust before thee, to address thee as my God, my Father, my Creator, my Benefactor, my Friend and Redeemer!

"O Lord, I would come with a heart broken and contrite for sin, acknowledging myself unworthy of the least of all thy mercies, and deserving nothing at thine hand but everlasting banishment from thee and happiness. Encouraged by thine own gracious promises, I would come, and, with humble confidence, take hold on the hope set before me, even thine everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things and sure. But, O God, what am I, that I should be called thy son, that I should call thee my Father, or that thou shouldst enter into covenant with me? I blush, and am ashamed even to lift up my face unto thee, O my Father; for I have sinned against thee, and am exceeding vile, vile beyond what language can describe or thought conceive. My iniquities are gone over my head; they are increased even to the heavens; they are infinite in number, in degree, and aggravation, and can be equalled only by thy mercies which have been new every moment. Thou, O God, hast given me life, and dost still preserve me in existence. Thou hast given me faculties which render me capable of knowing, serving, loving, worshiping, and enjoying thee. Thou hast placed me in this Christian land, and given me the knowledge of thee, myself, and my duty, while thousands of my fellow-creatures are left in darkness. Thou hast placed me in that situation in life which is most favorable to virtue, contentment, and happiness, and hast given me parents tender and affectionate, who early devoted me to thee, and taught me to lisp thy name, and to know thy precepts. Through their means thou hast given me opportunities of improving those faculties I have received from thee, and thus rendering myself more fit to serve thee. But above all, O my God, thou hast given me an interest in thy Son, and in all the blessings he has purchased. Thou hast given me the Spirit of adoption, whereby I am enabled to cry, Abba, Father. Thou hast given me thy precious grace in this world, as an earnest of glory in the next. Thou hast also loaded me with daily and hourly mercies, more than I can number. Thou hast kept me with more than parental care. Thou hast preserved me in sickness, protected me from dangers, shielded me while awake, watched over me in sleep, supported me in trials, strengthened me in weakness, succored me in temptations, comforted me in afflictions, and defended me against mighty and numberless enemies. Thou hast overwhelmed me with thy mercies; my cup runneth over. Thy goodness and thy mercy have followed me all the days of my life.

"Yet against all this goodness I have rebelled, have rewarded thee evil for good; thy mercies have only aggravated my guilt. O my God, what have I done! What madness, what obstinacy, what ingratitude has possessed me! My sins have run parallel with thy mercies. I have struck and wounded the hand that made me, fed me, preserved me. I have wasted in sin and folly the life thou gavest me. I have perverted those faculties I received from thy goodness in dishonoring thee, and in disobeying thy commands. I was shapen in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. My understanding is darkened and alienated from the truth; my will is stubborn and perverse; my affections are corrupted and depraved; and every imagination of the thoughts of my heart has been evil, only and continually evil. My carnal mind has been enmity against thee, and has not been in subjection to thy righteous and holy law. From this corrupt and bitter fountain have proceeded innumerable bitter, polluting streams. Though I was early taught thy will, I neglected to perform it. I have broken all thy commands, times without number. My words, thoughts, and actions, have been sinful. I have gone astray from my youth up.

"And even after thou didst take pity upon me, when I was cast out, polluted, to perish in my blood—after thou didst receive me, a poor, wretched prodigal, and didst cause thy wondrous goodness and mercy to pass before me, I have still continued to weary thee with my sins, and cause thee to serve with mine iniquities. I have broken that solemn covenant by which I bound myself to be thine. I have indulged an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, and have in all things dealt very treacherously. How often have I mocked thee with solemn words on a thoughtless tongue! How have I neglected thy word, profaned thine ordinances, broken thy law, and resisted thy grace! How little of a filial temper have I felt to thee, my Father! How little gratitude to thee, blessed Savior! How often have I grieved thee, O Holy Spirit, by whom I am sealed to the day of redemption! When thou liftest upon me the light of thy countenance, I grow proud, carnal, and secure; and when thou leavest me in darkness, when my own foolishness perverteth my way, then my proud heart fretteth against thee, the Lord. All my duties are polluted with innumerable sins, and are as a leprous garment before thee. And, after all thou hast done for me, I am still encompassed about with innumerable evils. Pride, unbelief, selfishness, lust, anger, hatred, malice, revenge, bitterness, slothfulness, vanity, love of the world, ignorance, formality, hypocrisy, and, with all these, self-conceit, are still the inhabitants, if not the lords, of my heart. And, as thou, O Lord, knowest, these are not the ten thousandth part of my sins and iniquities; so that I am the chief of sinners, and the least of all saints. * * * * * *

"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death? Vain, O Lord, thou knowest, are my endeavors, and vain is the help of man. I have ruined myself, and in thee alone, and in thy mercy, is my hope.

"To this mercy, against which I have so often sinned, would I flee for refuge, and laying my hand on my mouth, and my mouth in the dust, cry, Unclean unclean! True, Lord, I have sinned; but with thee there is mercy, with thee there is plenteous redemption. Thou, thou art he who blottest out our iniquities for thine own sake, and will not remember our sins against us. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and to this would I flee for refuge. In him do I put my trust; O let me not be ashamed. Let me plead before thee the merits of thy Son, and put thee in mind of thy gracious promises, that I may be justified. In his name, and as an unworthy member of his mystical body, would I come, and renew before thee that covenant which I have broken, and bind myself to be thine for ever. And do thou, for his sake, O God, assist me; for in thee is my strength.

"Relying on this strength for support, and confessing myself guilty of all these and innumerable other offences, and that I deserve, in justice, nothing but the lowest hell, and renouncing the destructive ways of sin,—I do, with my whole heart and soul, in a most serious, solemn, and deliberate manner, choose and take the Lord Jehovah to be my God and Father, cheerfully and joyfully renewing all my past engagements; and, in humble dependence on his grace, I engage to fear him, and cleave to him in love. And I do most freely give up myself, my interests, for time and for eternity, my soul and body, my friends and possessions, and all that I have, to his wise, just, and sovereign disposal. Especially do I devote myself to him in the service of the ministry, beseeching him to place me in that situation in which I shall most glorify him. And wilt thou, O most gracious and condescending God, accept this offering of thy creature, who can give thee nothing but what he has first received.

"With equal joy and readiness, and in the same serious and solemn manner, do I choose and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ to be my only Savior. I take him in all his offices—as my Priest, to make atonement for all my offences—as my Prophet, to guide, teach, enlighten and instruct me—as my King, to rule in and reign over me. I take him as the great Head of influences, from whom alone I can receive all needed supplies of grace and assistance.

"I do also take the Holy Spirit of all grace and consolation to be my Sanctifier, and promise not to grieve him, or to slight his warnings.

"And, O my God, what shall I more say? what can I ask, since I am thine, and thou art mine; mine, for time; mine, for eternity? O my God, I want nothing but to be wholly thine. I would plead thy promise for a new heart and a right spirit. O write this covenant on my heart, and put thy fear there, that I may not depart from thee. May I be made an able, faithful, and successful minister of the New Testament. May the life and concerns which I have now devoted to thee be employed in thy service; and may I, at length, be brought to the full enjoyment of thee in glory, through infinite riches of redeeming love.

"As a testimony of my sincere and hearty consent to this covenant, of my hope and desire to receive the blessings of it, and as a swift witness against me if I depart from it; I do now, before God and the holy angels, subscribe with my hand unto the Lord.

"EDWARD PAYSON.

"And may this covenant be ratified in heaven. And do thou remember, O my soul, that the vows of God are upon thee.

"Having drawn up the above covenant, I spread it before the Lord; and after confession of sins, and seeking pardon through the blood of Christ, I did solemnly accept it before him as my free act and deed; and embraced Christ in it, as the only ground of my hope. I then pleaded for all covenanted blessings, and was favored with great fervency and enlargement in prayer. An indisposition, which attended me through the day, rendered it less profitable than usual; yet I have abundant reason to bless God for the measure of assistance I received. I felt the most longing, intense, and insatiable desires after holiness, and to be employed in promoting the divine glory. The world, with its applause, seemed nothing in comparison with the approbation of God. Existence seemed worth possessing only as it could be employed in praising him."

In this and other places he descends to specifications of sins in terms which may be thought applicable to none but a monster of wickedness; and yet they are the judgment passed on himself by a man *always* and *universally* respected for the correctness and purity of his morals. His "pride" never looked with disdain upon the meanest fellow-creature; his "malice" and "revenge" never inflicted actual injury; and of any outbreakings of the baser and more degrading passions he stands unindicted by all except himself. Nor were these humiliating confessions, this extraordinary self-abasement, made to attract notice and give himself importance in the eyes of others—one of the very worst and most odious forms in which pride operates

—for to them no mortal was ever privy. They were not known to a fellow-creature till since he dropped the clods of mortality. They describe what he appeared to himself to be in the immediate presence of the perfectly holy and heart-searching God. Still, many will repeat the question—If he alludes to no crimes with which every man might not with equal propriety charge himself, whence the justice or truth of the charges? Here again he shall be his own interpreter. Let those who are oppressed with this difficulty carefully read his sermon entitled, *Sins estimated by the Light of Heaven*,* and they will find a full and satisfactory solution. This, and the sermon just alluded to, will furnish a key to the true import of much of the language which he employs in describing the darker and more distressing parts of his experience.

The effects of his severe regimen and night vigils on his health had already begun to appear, and were somewhat aggravated by a bodily injury which he received about this time. The circumstances are said to have been these: He had accompanied his father and another clergyman to an ordination. On their return, as he was feasting his mind with such meditations as the scenery and the occasion suggested, they outrode him. His horse, being left principally to his own guidance, by suddenly leaping a brook, brought his rider to the ground, whose right shoulder was dislocated by the shock. A partial faintness succeeded, from which he was recovered by bathing his temples with water from the stream. Attempting, in this disabled condition, to regain the saddle by leaping from a neighboring fence, he was precipitated over the horse to the ground, and the bone was restored to its place by the fall. In after life it was often displaced, and sometimes in circumstances not a little embarrassing and distressing; and for many months before his death, and even before he ceased to appear in the pulpit, that arm hung useless by his side. From this time the state of his health is the subject of frequent allusion, as may be seen from his journal, parts of which, for several successive days, are subjoined, bringing down his history to the date of his license to preach the Gospel:

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* Tract No. 40, American Tract Society.

"*May* 2. Was exceedingly weak through the day, both in body and mind, and was enabled to do little or nothing. Could only wish and sigh.

"*May* 3. Communion. Had considerable flow of affections, but seemed to want clearness and spirituality. In the afternoon was more dead and trifling. So far as I can judge from my feelings, have got little good by this opportunity. Felt deeply oppressed with guilt after meeting, but could not mourn over my sin, as I would fain have done, nor could I obtain any sense of divine love. But after a short time my compassionate Savior was pleased to melt my soul with a look of love, and I felt sweetly humbled and contrite for sin. Although I had carelessly let down my watch, yet in the evening he was pleased to return, and give me the sweetest humbling season I ever enjoyed. I never felt so vile, so insignificant, so like nothing, so emptied of self. And when I was thus empty, he was pleased to fill me with himself; so that I was burnt up with most intense love and pantings after holiness. Never before had I such faith and fervency in prayer.

I was as happy as nature could sustain, and could only say—Blessed Jesus! this is thy work. See my happiness. It proceeds from thee! This is the fruit of thy travail of soul. Renewed my covenant, and gave up my whole soul, with all its powers, to God as my Father, Christ as my Savior, and the Holy Spirit as my Sanctifier. Had another sweet season in prayer; but was assaulted by spiritual pride. I see frowns are necessary for me.

"*May* 4. Was less favored this morning than last evening; but had some assistance. Was aided in writing, but greatly oppressed with pride and vanity, which made their attacks upon me in inexpressible shapes, while I could do nothing.

"*May* 5. Spent this day in the woods, in fasting and prayer, with a view to obtain mortification of my abominable pride and selfishness. Was favored with much fervency and enlargement the former part of the day, but was afterward much deserted; seemed to make no advances in holiness; to be of no advantage to the world, and unfit to live.

"*May* 6. Had some freedom in prayer. Felt very feeble, and unfit for study; but, praying that Christ's strength might be made perfect in my weakness, I was helped to write more than usual.

"*May* 7. Out of order both in body and mind. Did little in my study, and had little freedom in prayer.

"*May* 8. Had some life and fervency this morning; but was exercised with wandering thoughts. Could do little all day.

"*May* 9. Was much perplexed with some business with ****, so that I could neither read nor pray, any more than I could remove a mountain This was made useful to me. I saw by it the weakness of my graces, and learned to judge more favorably of those Christians who are exposed to the temptations of the world. It showed me also my need of divine help more clearly than ever. Were I exposed to the same temptations, I should lose all sense of divine things without greater supports than I ever had.

"*May* 10. Was very unwell, and could neither eat, read, nor pray. Was excessively melancholy.

"*May* 11. Was still more oppressed with melancholy, and felt even more miserable. * * * * * * * * * Was ashamed of my selfishness and ingratitude, in despising the blessings God had given me. Remained very wretched, and unable to do any thing. In the evening had some relief.

"*May* 12. Was, if possible, still more gloomy and depressed than yesterday. Seemed unfit to preach, and even to do any thing. Could only wander about from place to place, seeking rest, and finding none. In the evening a person arrived from Marlborough, inviting me to come and preach four Sabbaths. After putting up a short but sincere petition that I might not be left to my own guidance, and asking the advice of my father, I promised to go. Retired, and cast myself upon the Lord for support, with a deep sense of my own utter insufficiency.

"*May* 13. Having set apart this day for fasting and prayer, with reference to entering on the work of the ministry, I sought the divine presence and blessing, in which I was much assisted. Renewed covenant with God, and gave myself up to him for the work of the ministry. Was helped to plead with far more earnestness than ever before, and, indeed, with as much as my nature could support, or was capable of, and this repeatedly during the day.

"*May* 14. Was very unwell, and apprehensive of a nervous fever. Could not read the most amusing books without weariness and distraction; and my body was so weak that I could exercise but very little. Yet, by divine goodness, was preserved in a quiet, submissive frame.

"*May* 15. Was better, and had some sweetness in secret devotion. Went to see an old man who has been converted in his old age. Found him full of affection, and possessing remarkably clear views of God and divine things, though in other respects weak and illiterate. Was somewhat refreshed with his conversation.—P. M. Forced to make a visit, but helped to introduce religious conversation.

"*May* 16. Felt very lifeless in the morning; but in secret prayer it pleased God to enliven me. In the evening was favored with equal, or greater degrees of fervency. My soul was suddenly humbled and broken for sin. I seemed to be much the least of all saints; and my very soul panted for God and holiness, as the hunted hart for the water-brook. Blessed be God for this day!

"*May* 17. Sabbath, A. M. Very dull and lifeless, but in secret prayer the cloud was removed, and I found unspeakable delight in drawing near to God, and casting myself upon him. Christ appeared inconceivably precious, and I longed, with most intense desire, to devote myself to him, and to be like him. I could not but rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, to think that God in Christ was, and would be, infinitely and unchangeably glorious and happy

In Christ I beheld such fullness and sufficiency, that all my late tormenting fears respecting being qualified for the ministry, and assisted in it, vanished. In the evening was overwhelmed with a view of my remaining corruptions, and especially of my pride; so that I was in a perfect agony, and could scarcely support it. I was just ready to despair, and give up all future striving as vain; but I fled to Christ, and poured out all my sorrows into his bosom, and he graciously pitied me, and strengthened me with might in my soul. I found unspeakable relief in telling him all my sorrows and difficulties. O, he is wonderfully, inconceivably gracious!

"*May* 18. Had very little freedom or fervency. Was perplexed with the scene before me, and could effect but little.

"*May* 19. Went with my father to the Association, for the purpose of receiving their approbation to preach the Gospel. Was exceedingly fatigued.

"*May* 20. Was examined and approbated. Was so weak that I could scarcely stand; but was helped in some measure."

CHAPTER VI.

His first efforts as a preacher—His religious character further developed.

Having been regularly introduced and recommended to the churches as a preacher, Mr. Payson proceeded, the next day, to Marlborough, to fulfill his engagement with the people of that place. Change of situation, however, did not interrupt his communion with God. On the way his mind was engrossed with divine contemplations, and with the duties and responsibilities of that new relation in which he now stood to the church and the world. During the time that intervened between this and the Sabbath he was not without misgivings; as he complains of being "almost discouraged and overwhelmed, in view of his unfitness for the ministry;" and once, of even "wishing himself any thing rather than a minister." He "could hardly conceive it possible that one so inconceivably vile should be a child of God; but was nevertheless helped to cast his burden on the Almighty, and to agonize in prayer to be delivered from this body of death." The Saturday next preceding his first appearance in the pulpit, he had "resolved to spend in fasting and prayer;" but when the day arrived his "health would not permit." The day on which a man first stands forth as the ambassador of God to his fellowmen, is an important era in his life; but it had been anticipated with so much concern by Mr. Payson, that it seems to have been distinguished by no extraordinary strength of feelings. His own account of them is thus expressed:

"*May* 24. Sab. Was favored with considerable fervency, life, and sense of dependence this morning. Endeavored to cast myself wholly on the Lord for support. As it was rainy, there were very few people at meeting; and I just got through without stopping. Spoke too fast and too low. Was a good deal depressed after meeting. In the afternoon did a little better, but still bad enough. Was very much fatigued, and almost in a fever; but enjoyed some comfort after meeting."

His public engagements, important as he felt them to be, did not divert his attention from his own heart. On the contrary, personal religion continued to be a primary concern. Of this, as well as of the varied nature of his spiritual exercises, there is an accumulation of evidence:

"*May* 28. Enjoyed a very unusual degree of sweetness and fervor this morning. O, how precious did Christ appear to my soul! How I longed to be a pure flame of fire in his service, to be all zeal, and love, and fervor! With what gratitude did I look up to him, saying, Blessed Savior, behold how happy I am! and to thee all my happiness is owing. But for thee, I should now have been lifting up my eyes, being in torments. O what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits! In the evening, in secret prayer, my soul was filled with unutterable longings and insatiable thirstings after God in Christ. I earnestly desired that all mankind might be as happy as I was; that they should all see what a glorious, amiable being God is, that they might love and praise him. Retired to rest with a clear, sweet, realizing apprehension of my Savior's presence, and dropped to sleep in this frame.

"*May* 29. Enjoyed much of the same spiritual sweetness which I felt last evening; but was much exercised on account of pride, or rather love of applause, which was excited by some approbation which, I lately heard, was bestowed on my preaching. Strove with all my might to be delivered from this hateful temper, and cried for some time to my Supporter and Strength ever to grant me his grace to help. Recalled to mind that I had nothing which I had not received; that I had most wickedly and shamefully wasted and neglected to improve my talents; that applause was commonly ill-bestowed; and that the praise of men was of no worth compared with the approbation of God. By the divine blessing on these and other similar considerations, I was helped to overcome it. In the evening was much assisted in prayer. Had a greater spirit of wrestling for the conversion of sinners than I ever had before."

He is often "discouraged by the little which he accomplishes, and the selfish motives with which that little is defiled." He is assailed by "strong temptations, which drive him to his knees for assistance;" and by "frequent recurrence of the same temptation," which costs him long and severe "struggles, before he is favored with complete victory." This is followed by "increased confidence in God, as able to supply all his need, and at the same time with a more humbling sense of his unfitness for the ministry." And even when he is in a "lively frame," during several successive days, he is still "astonished at his slow progress in religion." Again, "pride and unbelief begin to work and render him miserable;" and for defence against them he resorts "to prayer, pleading various arguments for the space of an hour, before he is able to repress pride and repining thoughts." Nor is this the extremity of his conflict: he has such "a dreadful view of his heart, that he could scarcely support the sight of himself;" while this, "instead of *humbling*, only distressed him, so that he is at last obliged to desist, without, as he can perceive, any answer at all." The next day he can cry "Abba, Father!" with all the confidence of filial love:

"*June* 6. Had many sweet seasons of prayer during the day, and was assisted in pleading for the presence of the Divine Spirit to-morrow.

"*June* 8. Had great earnestness in secret prayer. Longed to be wholly devoted to God. Thought if I could, from this time, do every thing for his glory, I would willingly resign every worldly comfort, and be the most despised object on the face of the earth. Went to a funeral, and was assisted in speaking to the mourners, and in prayer.

"*June* 9. Renewed covenant, and took God for my God, and gave myself up to him in sincerity, and with more joy than I ever did before. In the afternoon was favored with another most sweet and refreshing season in secret prayer. Have seldom, if ever, felt more fervency, more hatred of sin, and more longing desires after holiness.

"*June* 10. The family being mostly absent to-day, I resolved to spend it in fasting and prayer for a supply of ministerial gifts and Christian graces; especially that I might be made an able, faithful, and successful minister of the New Testament. Was assisted both last night and this morning, in seeking the divine presence and blessing. God graciously heard and answered me. I was favored with great and unusual fervency and perseverance in prayer; was enabled to confess and mourn over my sins, and to mourn because I could not mourn more; and was assisted in renewing covenant with God, and in giving myself up to be his for ever. Was entirely exhausted and worn out in body and mind, before night, by the strong and unutterable desires I felt after personal holiness and the success of Christ's kingdom. On the whole, it has been a very profitable day to my soul, as, by divine goodness, most, if not all, my fast days have been."

Four days after this he experienced a most melancholy reverse, viewing himself as the "most vile, loathsome, worthless wretch in existence; could only throw himself prostrate, and utter the cry of the publican—'God, be merciful to me a sinner.'" The cause of this distress is unintentionally indicated. He was "sick in *body* and mind." But,

"As poison oft the force of poison quells,"

so the far more wretched condition, and still more melancholy prospects, of a fellow-creature caused him to forget his own misery:

"Was called to see a sick man, supposed to be dying; he was a professor, aged eighty-seven. Found him something alarmed, but he gave no satisfactory evidence of a change. Stated to him his danger and the remedy, but, I fear, to little purpose. Was much assisted in preaching. My strength continued, and even increased, though quite exhausted at the close. Went to see the sick man again. Found him better in body, but worse in mind.

"*June* 19. Rose in the same state of mind in which I lay down. Rode out, and felt some better, so that I found some liberty to pray.—P. M. Went with fear and trembling to attend a funeral. Was assisted in speaking to the mourners: as the multitude was very great, I was requested to pray out of doors; and, though the situation was new, and I was unwell, I was carried through. Felt some relief from my load of melancholy, and was enabled to write.

"*June* 20. Set apart this day for fasting and prayer. Was unusually assisted in pleading for increase in holiness. Felt such intense longings and thirstings after more love to God and man, more devotedness to God's will, more zeal for his glory, that my body was almost overcome. Towards night was enabled to plead with greater fervency than ever, so that I trust this will prove the most profitable day I have ever had. In the evening was greatly assisted in prayer, so that I could scarcely retire to rest.

"*June* 21. Went to meeting with raised expectations; but it pleased God to leave me more destitute than usual, though I was carried through. When I first came out of the pulpit I was not in a very good frame; but before I got half way home, was easy, satisfied, and even pleased to be despised, so that God's will might be done. Was much more assisted in the afternoon. Felt thankful.

"*June* 22. Very unusual degrees of fervor this morning. Very unwell all day, and did little in my study. In the evening was overwhelmed with a sense of my own unworthiness.

"*June* 23. As soon as I awoke this morning my heart was filled with most intense love to God and

Christ, so that it was even ready to break for the longing desires it had to go forth after God. I was greatly assisted in praying that I might be made an instrument of promoting the divine glory in the world.

"*June* 25. Thinking it would be more convenient to keep my weekly fast on this day, sought the divine presence and blessing. Felt some warm affections towards my Savior at first, but afterwards could neither realize my wants, nor pray to have them removed. Continued in this frame till towards night, and was then favored with a deep sense of my utter vileness. Was also enabled to plead, even with agony of soul, to be freed from the power of a selfish nature Could not think of being any longer subject to it.

"*June* 26. Much favored. Felt insatiable desires after holiness, and that I might spend every moment of future life to the divine glory.

"*June* 29. *Faint, yet pursuing*, is a good motto for me. Could do nothing in the morning, but in the afternoon gave up all hopes of ever doing any thing. Iniquities seemed to prevail against me, and I was ready to despair; but, throwing myself on the Lord Jesus for help, I received strength. In the evening was favored with freedom. Felt that I am much more habitually affected by religious subjects than I have been formerly; nor are my affections less vehement, or less easily excited.

"*July* 5. Sabbath. Had some devout feelings and desire after assistance this morning, but could not get hold of any thing in a very realizing manner. Was very much deserted in prayer and sermon, and felt much distressed; but in the afternoon was favored with great enlargement, both in prayer and sermon

Felt a strong love for souls, and for the Lord Jesus. Was weak and exhausted; but, after resting awhile, had a most sweet, refreshing, strengthening season in prayer. Never before felt so much of the spirit of the Gospel. Felt like a pure flame of love towards God and man. Self seemed to be almost swallowed up Felt willing to go any where, or be any thing, by which God could be glorified and sinners saved. Felt my hopes of being useful in the world strengthened. O how lovely, how kind, how condescendingly gracious, did my God appear! Gave myself up to him without reserve, and took him for my only portion. Blessed be his name for this season.

"*July* 6. Rode out this morning, and found much sweetness in continually lifting up my heart to God in fervent ejaculations. In the evening had such a view of the difficulties in my way, and of my exceeding sinfulness, that I was ready to sink; but my blessed Savior put forth his hand and caught me.

"*July* 7. Was harassed with wandering, gloomy, and distressing imaginations. Could not fix upon a text, and was much perplexed what to do. Was overwhelmed with melancholy.—P. M. Went to a funeral, and was favored with some assistance. Went to make a visit; found good Christian people, a most kind reception, and profitable conversation."

Few enjoyments were more exquisitely satisfying to Mr. Payson than those which he derived from religious intercourse. In a company of fellow Christians, whose feelings would rise responsive to his own when the themes of a Savior's love, and of human obligation and privilege, were agitated, his soul seemed to revel in spiritual delights; and he was gifted by nature and grace with the prerogative of infusing a rich portion of his own emotions into the rest of the favored circle. These interviews are remembered by many a surviving pilgrim, as among the liveliest emblems of that "better country," which he has ceased to anticipate, by actual fruition. It is not without a degree of shrinking that we follow him in his sudden transition from scenes like these into the very depths of distress. "Other griefs," he says, "leave the mind strength to grapple with them; but this oppressive melancholy cuts the very sinews of the soul, so that it lies prostrate, and cannot exert itself to throw off the load."

The next day after penning this graphic and unequalled description of his *real* malady, he is seen in the "chariot of Aminadab," his mind moving with an angel's speed, and performing the labor of many days in one:—"Was favored with fervency and freedom in prayer. Was greatly assisted in writing through the day, and wrote nearly two sermons. Felt in a composed, thankful frame all day, and felt the most ardent love for the Lord Jesus, and for all mankind."

In the mitigated forms of melancholy there is a soul-subduing power, which few are able to resist. It then loses its repulsive character, and the soul of the witness is attracted and melted into sympathy. A mind conscious of its misery, yet retaining its balance, and surveying its own desolations with unrepining submission, presents a spectacle of moral sublimity, not surpassed by any thing which falls under human observation. This constitutes one of the charms of our Savior's character, and much of the value of his example. In this attitude Mr. Payson may be seen in some of the following extracts, and very often in the course of his life.

"*July* 17. Find that the two principal things in which I fail externally, are, the due improvement of time and the government of my tongue. I daily lose many moments—I might almost say hours—in giving way too much to my feelings of gloom and discouragement; and I say many things which at best are unprofitable.

"*July* 19. Sab. Rose very early, worn out in body and mind; but felt sweetly resigned to the divine will, and was willing to be assisted as much, and as little, as God should see fit. Had some assistance; but after meeting was excessively weak and depressed; thought I would give the world if I never had preached, and it seemed as if I never should go into the pulpit again.

"*July* 20. Overwhelmed, sunk, discouraged with a sense of sin. All efforts seemed to be in vain. Discoveries of my vileness, instead of humbling me, as might be expected, only excited discouragement and unbelief; while the manifestations of God's love only make me proud and careless. My wretched soul cleaves to the dust!

"*July* 22. O what a dreadful, what an inconceivable abyss of corruption is my heart! What an amazing degree of pride and vanity, of selfishness and envy, does it contain!

"*July* 23. Was excited to feel fretful and peevish at two or three trifling circumstances; but fled for refuge to the throne of grace, and, by praying for myself, for the persons with whom I was disposed to be offended, and especially by meditating on the meekness and gentleness of Christ, was enabled to preserve peace and tranquillity of mind. Was much assisted in prayer.

"*July* 24. Was visited by a young student in divinity, and had some profitable conversation with him. Was never able to converse in a clearer manner upon religious subjects.

"*July* 25. This being my birth-day, I set it apart for solemn fasting and prayer, with thanksgiving. After confessing and mourning over the sins of my past life, and contrasting them with God's mercies, and offering up praise and thanksgiving for his goodness, I solemnly renewed covenant with God, and, with my whole heart, so far as I could judge, gave myself, my friends, and all that I have, to be disposed of as he should see fit. I felt willing to live or die, as God pleased, and to go among the Indians, or to any part of the world, where I could be instrumental in promoting the glory of God and the happiness of man. Felt unusually longing, insatiable, and intense desires after holiness of heart and life, and especially after humility. Was never enabled to pray more fervently for spiritual blessings—could wrestle and persevere therein. Felt an impression that this is the last birthday I shall ever see."

The next day was the Sabbath, and he was so far spent with its labors, that it was with difficulty he could reach his lodgings. The night was passed without rest; and of his increased weakness in the morning "Satan was suffered to take advantage, and fill his mind with unutterable anguish." But he "*found relief in prayer*, and felt strengthened to go on with fresh vigor in the Christian course, exclaiming—O how true it is, that to those who *have no might he increaseth strength.*"

"*July* 29. I yesterday read an author on the subject of human depravity; and, being perplexed with some of his objections, prayed to be guided to the truth in this doctrine. Was now convinced, beyond a doubt, that in me naturally dwelt no good thing. O how vile, how loathsome did my heart appear! I was ready to think I had never known any thing at all of my own character before, and that there were infinite depths in my nature that I could not see. In the course of the day was favored with still further discoveries of myself, of true holiness, and of Christ, so that I seemed never to have known any thing of religion before.

"*Aug.* 3. My blessed Savior, compassionating my weakness, was pleased to make me strong in himself, and to favor me with a most refreshing season. Never felt so desirous to depart and be with Christ, and at the same time more willing to live* and undergo all hardships for his glory. Desired that my life might be spent in a close walk with God."

His "desire to become a missionary" revived about this time, but did not ripen into a fixed purpose, for the plain reason, that he could not determine that such was the will of God. He submitted the decision of the question to his Master in heaven, praying "that God would do with him as he pleased, in this respect."

"*Aug.* 5. Was greatly perplexed and distressed, yet tried to keep myself in a quiet, waiting frame, but found great difficulty in keeping out impatient, murmuring thoughts. Could not determine whether my being thus deserted was to punish me for my slothfulness and misimprovement of time, or only for the trial of my faith and patience. My soul remembered

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*** " Nor love thy life, nor hate; but what thou liv'st,**
" Live well; how long or short, permit to heaven."

the bitterness and the gall which it had once before experienced on a similar occasion, and shuddered at the idea of a renewal."

Extracts might be multiplied, exhibiting him as sinking in deep waters, where the floods overflow him," and then again "surprised with a sudden visit from his blessed Lord, full of sweetness to his soul;" his mind at one time so clogged in its operations by his burdens, that he "tried in vain to write;" at another, so buoyant, that, "though almost confined to his bed, he is enabled to write a whole sermon in a day." This contrast is no where more strikingly marked than by the following entry, after suffering from "melancholy, which overwhelmed him like a thousand mountains, so that his soul was crushed under it:"

"*Aug.* 15. Rose in a sweet, tranquil, thankful frame, blessing God for the storm of yesterday, and the calm to-day. O, how great is his wisdom, how great his goodness! Had faith and freedom in prayer. Yesterday I thought God himself could hardly carry me through. But to-day—O, how changed!"

Before this the reader may have expected to learn what influence his secret devotions had on the services of the sanctuary, also the result of his public labors in regard to the people to whom he ministered. It is almost superfluous to add, that they were not without effect. Others "took knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus." The solemnity and unction of his social prayers; the earnestness and variety of argument with which he pleaded at the throne of grace, his unyielding importunity for the blessings which he sought,—had roused attention, and drawn forth the confession that "the Spirit of the holy God was within him." "God *must* help him, or he could never pray so," said an observing man, who had previously professed no regard for religion. Herein he doubtless expressed the generally-prevailing sentiment, as Mr. Payson mentions among his trials, "well-meant, but injudicious commendations"—while he renders "all the glory to God, who did not suffer him to forget his own weakness."

But besides the general impression produced by his preaching, he was instrumental of individual conversions. More than once he was allowed to record an event like the following—"Truly in faithfulness God afflicts me. Early this morning a young man came to me under deep distress of mind, and gave quite satisfactory evidence that he had experienced a real change. He said he had received great benefit from my preaching. This was a very seasonable cordial to my fainting spirits." Such events caused him to "retire to his chamber, overflowing with wonder and gratitude at God's unmerited goodness to such a miserable wretch."

His faithful conversation was also blessed to the family with whom he resided; and the last Sabbath on which he officiated at Marlborough, it was his happiness to propound his host and hostess as candidates for admission into the church. Thus early did God honor his ministry, and give him an earnest of the power which was to attend the word dispensed by him.

Enough has been developed to show the secret of Dr. Payson's greatness, and of his success. He laid hold on the divine strength. Prayer, by which the creature communes with God, and obtains grace to help in every time of need, was eminently the business of his life, and the medium through which he derived inexhaustible supplies. It was not the stated morning and evening incense alone which he offered; but that he had "much enlargement, and many sweet seasons of prayer during the day," is matter of frequent record, and probably of still more frequent experience. Almost incessantly was he conversant with spiritual and eternal things. His conversation was in heaven. He also valued and sought the intercessions of others. In a letter to his parents, probably the first he wrote after he commenced preaching, he says—"I beg you to pray for me most earnestly and importunately. I seem to be walking on a hair, and hardly dare go down to breakfast or dinner, lest I should say or do something which may disgrace the ministry, or hurt the cause of religion; so that I shall never need your prayers more than now." The sensibility to danger, here so apparent, though it occasionally subjected him to temporary indecision and perplexity, was, next to the promised support of the Most High, his greatest security.

It will also have been seen that Mr. Payson was subject to great extremes of feeling—at one time, "caught up," with Paul, where he "heard things unutterable;" at another, sunk to the lowest point of depression, where existence was a "burden too heavy for him." Many have imagined his Christian career to have been one of uninterrupted joy and triumph, and such will, perhaps, regret any allusion to those seasons when "his soul was cast down in him;" but to keep these out of sight, would be to conceal a class of affections, from which his exercises, language and conduct received important modifications.

In judging of this class of his exercises, it should not be forgotten that his health was already undermined; his system had lost much of its elasticity, and encountered a shock, from the effects of which it never afterwards recovered. Besides, he had a constitutional predisposition to melancholy, which other branches of his family are said to have inherited to a still more painful degree. His religion, instead of being the cause of his gloom, was his only refuge from its overwhelming effects. The precious doctrines of grace, according to his own views of them, alone kept him from sinking.

There is one aspect in which all the hardships that he imposed on himself—the ruin of his constitution by abstinence, night vigils, and extraordinary exertion, and even all his mental agonies—may be viewed with a feeling of entire reconciliation. All these trying processes, to which he subjected his mind, may justly be regarded as a series of experiments on himself, designed by Providence for the good of the church, indeed of the human race. To him, in the exercise of his future ministry, they were incalculably valuable. The knowledge acquired by this painful experience was not without vast expense to himself; but it constituted one of his most important qualifications for aiding numerous other souls through the labyrinths of error and mental distress. In this way he was taught "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary"—to be "a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, a teacher of babes." So familiar did he become with almost every possible case of conscience, every form of spiritual trial and delusion to which either inquirers or established

Christians are exposed, that he could instantly recognise their symptoms, and apply the needed antidote.

In all his revolutions of feeling, varied exercises, and changing frames, there is discoverable an unvarying simplicity of purpose. The destruction of sin, and the extension of the empire of holiness in himself and others, are the objects constantly before him. His eye was single, and directed to the glory of God; and he longed for the salvation of men, as the work in which the divine glory eminently appears. He complains frequently of his pride, vanity, and selfishness —qualities, doubtless, eminently congenial with his unrenewed nature, but which were now evidently most unwelcome intruders, and which it was his constant grief that he could not wholly dislodge. Let those who would convert his full confessions into a proof "that he was sinful above all men," be reminded, that, if they were to watch the motions of their own hearts with the same unrelenting severity, they might find even greater abominations than any of which he complains, holding hitherto undisturbed empire over their souls; and not, as in him, annoying, yet conquered passions, which the gracious principle would in the end wholly eradicate.

On the 18th of August he took "a very affectionate leave of the family by whom he had been so kindly entertained," and revisited home, where he spent three days; and then "set out in a violent rain for North Andover," Mass. where he had an engagement to preach, and "felt some consolation in reflecting that he was going on his Father's and Savior's business." The second day he arrived, "wet, wearied, and dejected." Of his performances on the following Sabbath he says—"I had little assistance in preaching, and pleased *neither the people nor myself.*" He immediately proceeded to the scene of his future labors—a field vastly more extensive, and one which he was eminently fitted to occupy.

CHAPTER VII.

Visits Portland—his favorable reception, and Ordination.

On the morning of Monday, August 24th, Mr. Payson proceeded to Portland; his mind absorbed with heavenly meditations on the road, and praying and renewing his covenant with God at his resting-places. Stop where he might, he was sure to find or to make the place a Bethel; and while the solemnity of his devotions resembled that of the patriarch's on his way to Padan-aram, his faith realized what that patriarch saw in vision, and found an open way of communication between earth and heaven. Thus he journeyed,

> "Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise."

He arrived on the morning of the third day, entered upon the appropriate duties of his calling with the most exemplary diligence and energy, and the effects were almost immediately visible. Such was the attention excited by his preaching, that he seems to have regarded himself as in great danger of thinking more highly of himself than he ought to think, and to have brought all his spiritual forces to bear against this propensity. With reference to this, he observed frequent seasons of humiliation, and oftener renewed the consecration of himself and his talents to God. It was the burden of his secret prayers, that he might be delivered from pride, from self-seeking, from preaching himself, instead of Christ Jesus the Lord.

" *Sept.* 6. Heard my performances much commended; and, fearing lest I should feel puffed up, I withdrew, and prayed earnestly that I might be preserved from it. And God was pleased to assist me in a most wonderful and unusual manner in pleading, not only for that and other mercies, but in renewing covenant with him, and praising him for all his mercies. Never felt more gratitude, more humility, more love to God and benevolence to man, than at this time. Indulged some hopes that God would pour out his Spirit, but hardly expected it. Saw that all the mercies I received were bestowed for the sake of my Lord Jesus alone; and that in myself I was far more deserving of hell than of all that happiness. Could not praise God as I wished, but my soul panted, and almost fainted with ardor of desire to glorify him, and be wholly devoted to his service.

" *Sept.* 14. Read Baxter on Pride. Was almost overwhelmed to see how much I have in my heart. Could hardly refrain from despairing of ever being humble."

In a letter to his father, written a few days after this, he complains of himself in the following strain:

" I almost despair of making any improvement in this world. God keeps loading me with one blessing on another, but I cannot grow any more grateful. I cannot feel less proud, less selfish, less worldly-minded. O, if God by his Spirit did not prevent me, and still in a manner force me to keep striving almost against my will, I should give up in despair. It makes no difference—let me labor ever so much, and feel ever so lively while alone, the moment I go into the pulpit I am as dead and stupid as a post, and have no realizing sense of divine things. The meeting-house is the grave of every thing good, and the place where corruption always gets the mastery. Sometimes it seems impossible that it should be so. I set out from home so strong, so raised above the world, with so much zeal for God, and so much compassion for poor, perishing sinners, that I cannot help hoping it is going to be better with me. But the moment I begin it is all gone! When I seem to be much engaged, and the people think I am all on fire, I fear that God sees my heart like a mere block of ice. If there are any who can look back with pleasure on a life well spent, I can hardly hope that I am a Christian, or that I ever shall be one; for never shall I be able to do that. Adieu, my dearest parents: do continue to pray for me, for I am walking on ice, or, as the prophet says, "in slippery places in darkness."

Mr. Payson's situation was at this time truly critical and dangerous. His reception as a preacher was flattering almost beyond example. Not one man in a thousand can bear human applause uninjured. "Wo unto you," said Christ to his disciples, "when all men shall speak well of you." The most dreadful part of this wo is that which falls upon one's spiritual interests. Mr. Payson had scarcely been six weeks in Portland before overtures were made to him, by three respective congregations, to become their teacher; and there was also a plan agitated to build him a new meeting-house. Applications from neighboring churches, and likewise from abroad, were also frequent. The letters which he wrote to his parents, at this period, contain interesting allusions to his circumstances:

"*Portland*, *Sept.* 12, 1807.

"MY DEAREST PARENTS,

"When I came here I could not help indulging a secret hope that I should be so favored as to see some happy effects resulting from it. I know not, however, whether it arose so high as hope; it was, perhaps, rather a wish. Whether this wish will in any degree be gratified, is at present uncertain. The people seem to rouse themselves up, and stare, and hardly know what to make of it. They, however, appear to exhibit less enmity and ill will than I expected. Some of the principal men, who are not suspected of being very friendly to religion, say, as I am informed, that, to be sure, my sermons are rather hot, but they are convinced no other kind of preaching would ever do any good. Others say, it cuts up all their own foundation, and all their hopes of heaven; but they think it a duty to support these doctrines, because they are true. The congregation is very solemn and attentive; but I dare not yet hope for any lasting effects. Some are displeased, and have left the meeting; but there are three come from other meetings for one who goes away. The power of novelty, however, is great, and when that is over, I expect there will be less attention, and less crowded meetings."

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"I understand there is quite a revival of religion at

North Yarmouth, about a dozen miles from this place. There have already been two or three there, and they seem to be remarkably favored. One memorable instance, which has lately taken place, I have just heard. Three females, the wives of three sea-captains who were all at sea in different parts of the world, were deeply impressed, and, after severe convictions, obtained comfort. Just about the same time all their absent husbands were converted at sea. The wives meanwhile were anxious for the spiritual welfare of their husbands, and the husbands were no less concerned for their wives. Judge what a happy meeting they must have had when they found what God had done for each other during their separation. The attention is still increasing, and there have been about thirty added to the church."

"*September* 19.

"I have been ill a week of the influenza, which attacked me pretty severely. It seems as if it was sent to afford a fresh opportunity for displaying the unwearied care and kindness of our heavenly Father in raising up friends whenever I want them. In this case he has provided me a nurse and a mother in the woman who presides over the family in Mrs. K.'s absence. She has been doubting respecting her state, and her right to join the church, for some years; and was so thankful because I conversed with her on these subjects, that she was ready to kill me with kindness. In addition to this, I have been overwhelmed with preserves, jellies, &c. from all parts. Some have sent them in, from whom I should have little expected it. It seems as if God were putting it to trial, whether my insensible heart can be wrought upon by mercies. I fear the result of the trial will be, that nothing but severe judgments will answer.

"I sometimes think it strange, that, when God is so ready to bestow mercies, he does not enable us to receive them with more gratitude, and why he seems less ready to give us grace to conquer pride and self. Pray for me, my dear parents, that I may be enabled to conquer them."

"*September* 26.

"I am, and have been for some days, in a great dilemma. Last Monday I had an application to preach for a new congregation here, which Mr. S. the missionary has lately drawn together. They have heard me at Mr. K.'s, and intimated that, if I would come, they should probably settle me, as one man had offered a hundred pounds to the society on that condition, and thirty more had offered to subscribe for pews. On Tuesday I had an invitation from Westboro' to come immediately, and another from Gorham. They have also applied to me to come to Dr. Deane's parish, and preach for them; and now, this morning, Mr. Kellogg has a letter from Portsmouth, wishing me to come there immediately. On the other hand, Mr. K. insists upon it that I ought to stay with him through the month of October. There seems to be some attention excited, and two persons have been convinced, and I hope converted, since I have been here. It is, I find, Mr. K.'s plan, if I should prove popular enough, to have a new society, and unite it with his own in such a manner as to have one parish in two societies, and two ministers to preach in each house alternately

"Now, my dear parents, what shall I do? I am so much afraid that I shall be left to lean to my own understanding, that I have no comfort. I wish to go to Portsmouth, because it is on my way home; but principally because the society there is in a bad state, and in great danger of breaking up and going to the Universalists. On the other hand, there seems to be a door opened for great usefulness here; and Providence has, in some measure, owned my labors, and the people seem very anxious to have me stay. If one could only hear the Spirit as a voice behind him, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," it seems duty would be easily discovered. I know that there is no need of being uneasy, when we have done the best we can to discover the path of duty: but there is so much self-seeking in every thing I do, that I cannot be sure I have sincerely sought to discover the path of duty. It is such a dreadful thing to be left to follow one's own guidance. My dear father, do write to me."

The following sentences from his diary will be regarded as a curiosity by those who are acquainted with Dr. Payson's eminence as a ready speaker.

"*Sept.* 25. In the evening went to a conference, and for the first time expounded extempore. Made out poorly."

His rapidly rising fame, and the flattering attentions paid him as a preacher, injurious as they can hardly fail to be, did not divert Mr. Payson from the great object of the ministry of reconciliation. If his desire for personal holiness was exceeded by any other, it was by the desire of the salvation of sinners.

"*Sept.* 27. Sab. Was favored with great and unusual assistance both parts of the day, and the people were remarkably serious and attentive. Came home overwhelmed with a sense of the astonishing goodness of God. Felt grateful, humble, and contrite, and was enabled to ascribe all the glory to God. In the evening was favored with great faith and fervency in prayer. It seemed as if God would deny me nothing, and I wrestled for multitudes of souls, and could not help hoping there would be some revival here.

"*Sept.* 28. Found that my labors have not been altogether without effect. Was favored with the greatest degree of freedom and fervency in interceding for others. I seemed to travail in birth with poor sinners, and could not help hoping that God is about to do something for his glory and the good of souls.

"*Sept.* 29. Was considerably affected with a view of the awful condition of sinners, and was favored with some freedom in praying for them. I know not what to think, but at present there seem to be some indications in Providence that this is to be my station in the vineyard. I desire to bless God that he scarcely suffers me either to hope or fear the event, and gives me resignation to whatever he may appoint.

"*Sept.* 30. Felt much of a dependent, confiding, child-like spirit. God is doing great things for me. I never enjoyed such a season before as I have for these three days past. My heart overflows with love and thankfulness to God, and pity for poor sinners.

"*Oct.* 4. Went to meeting with more of a solemn frame than usual. Was greatly assisted, and the congregation was apparently very solemn and devout. Was ready to sink, to see how easily the impression seemed to wear off.

"*Oct.* 7. Visited two persons under conviction; conversed and prayed with them. Had a most refreshing season in secret prayer. Renewed covenant with God. My soul seemed to dilate and expand with happiness. All the stores of divine grace were opened, and I took freely for myself and others. Was assisted to plead for poor sinners.

"*Oct.* 8. Was favored with clear displays of the divine glory this morning, and was enabled to rejoice in God with joy unspeakable. Felt sweetly humbled and resigned to every thing which should befall me. In the afternoon preached a lecture, and was left dry and barren. In the evening preached another, and was very greatly assisted. Came home humbled in the dust under some stirrings of spiritual pride, which I could not repress. Was favored with a most refreshing season in secret prayer. Felt that love which casteth out fear, and hung on the bosom of my God with inexpressible pleasure. The Scriptures too were exceedingly sweet. Had been in some perplexity respecting the path of duty; but was helped to roll the whole burden upon Him.

"*Oct.* 9. Was visited by a minister who heard me preach last evening, and received many valuable hints from him respecting my feelings in prayer and preaching.

"*Oct.* 11. Never was in such an agony before in wrestling for mercies, especially in behalf of poor souls, and for a work of religion in this place. My soul seemed as if it would leave the body and mount to heaven in the most ardent desires for their salvation. Went by invitation to spend the evening in an irreligious family; found several assembled, and, to my very great but pleasing surprise, the conversation took a very serious.

religious turn. Came home, hoping that God was on the point of doing something in this place, but was so worn out that I had little life in prayer.

" *Oct.* 16. Church meeting—a profitable and refreshing time. Some new persons are awakened; Christians are stirred up, and there is every reason to hope God is on the point of appearing for us.

" *Oct.* 17. Was enabled, in some measure, to mourn over my pride and selfishness, unbelief, and hardness of heart. Having last evening proposed to the church that we should spend an hour this evening in prayer, separately, for the outpouring of the Spirit, attempted to pray, but feared my motives were selfish. However, prayed that God's people might not be ashamed on my account.

" Was informed that the church and congregation had given me a unanimous call. I know not what Providence intends by this. Went and spread the matter before God, and entreated him to overrule all things to his own glory.

" *Oct.* 19. Spent the whole day in conversing with persons exercised in their minds. In the evening visited and prayed with a number of persons who met for that purpose.

" *Oct.* 20. Felt something of the constraining influence of the love of Christ. For some nights past have been laboring in my sleep with poor souls. Felt strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. In the afternoon went to visit two persons in distress for their sins. In the evening preached a lecture extempore. Was not much assisted myself, but what was said seemed to come with power. Many were in tears, and all seemed stirred up; so that, though I went crushed down under discouragement, I came back rejoicing.

" *Oct.* 22. Began to feel more clear respecting my compliance with the call I have received.

" *Oct.* 23. Was left to murmur and feel impatient, and my proud, unhumbled heart rose against God; but he was graciously pleased to touch my heart, and bring me on my knees before him, and thus I obtained pardon. In the evening attended a conference, and preached. Was very much shut up, but found it was a most refreshing season to many of God's people, so that I was astonished to see how God could work by the most feeble means.

" *Oct.* 24. Went to visit a man almost in despair. He talked like a Christian, but was in dreadful distress, and rejected all comfort. Prayed with him, but in vain.

" *Oct.* 25. Visited and prayed with a sick woman. Found her and her husband under strong convictions In the evening was visited by persons under concern of mind, and conversed with them.

" *Oct.* 27. In the evening attended a conference, and preached to a crowded and solemn audience. Saw the hand of God evidently appearing in it, and came home strengthened, though I had gone much cast down.

" *Oct.* 28. Felt some gratitude and humility this morning. Wondered how God could choose such a worthless wretch to bestow such favors upon. Dined with * * *, a lawyer, and had much religious conversation with him, with which he seemed much affected. In the evening met a number who were under serious impressions. Conversed and prayed with them

" *Oct.* 29. Was greatly drawn out in prayer for a continuance of God's presence, and for myself and some particular friends. Spent the day in visiting a number of persons who were under concern, and found that some who had been dear to my heart, and who I could hardly hope were under conviction, appeared to have met with a real change. Was overwhelmed with wonder, love, and gratitude, at the goodness of God; but, as an offset to this, was informed of some injurious observations, and was, moreover, harassed and almost distracted with doubts where Providence called me to settle; but was able, at length, to cast the burden upon the Lord."

On the 30th of October he set out on a journey to his father's, taking Portsmouth on his way, where he preached on the Sabbath, and received a request from the people to stay among them, which he felt it his duty to decline. He reached home November 3, and spent the following day in conversing with his friend: "Consulted them respecting my call, and found that they were unanimous in advising me to accept the call of Mr. Kellogg's congregation. Rejoiced to see my path made plain before me."

" *Nov.* 6. Parted from my friends with prayer, and set out for Portsmouth in a violent storm, which continued most of the day. Was harassed with storms within, part of the way, but afterwards was calm.

" *Nov.* 8. Was favored with a most sweet, refreshing season, before meeting, in secret prayer. Preached three times, the last to a crowded and solemn assembly. Was invited to stay and preach on probation, but was obliged to decline.

"*Nov.* 9. Rode to Portland. Was favored on the road with very clear manifestations of God's love. Felt most ardent emotions of gratitude, with full resolutions to devote myself to the service of God. Was overwhelmed with a sense of his mercies and my own unworthiness.

"*Nov.* 10. Had a deep sense of the difficulty and importance of the gospel ministry, and of my own utter insufficiency for it. Was ready to sink under it, till in some measure relieved by a view of the fulness and sufficiency of Christ. Moses and Jeremiah were very encouraging examples.

"*Nov.* 13. In the evening attended a church conference and preached. Divine truth, though in an humble garb, came with great power, and the hearers seemed much affected.

"*Nov.* 15. Preached and read my affirmative answer to the call. Was favored with liberty, and the people seemed to be affected.

"*Nov.* 17. Visited a sick man; found him partly deranged, clasping a Bible to his breast, which he would not suffer to be taken from him.

"*Nov.* 30. Very unwell. From some symptoms feel apprehensive that my cough may terminate in a consumption; but the thought is not disagreeable. The only thing painful about it is the pain it would give my parents.

"*Dec.* 1. Had a sleepless, painful night, but, through divine goodness, was kept patient, and even cheerful. Was very sick in the morning.

Dec. 3. Still quite unwell, but had a sight of my necessities, and was helped to cry out for assistance.—P. M. Had a sweet season in prayer. Could pray sin cerely that others might be exalted above me in gifts and graces, and that souls might be converted, let who would be the instrument. Felt weaned from the world and resigned to whatever might befall me.

" *Dec.* 4. Extremely weak. Am convinced that I cannot live many years, if many months. Went out to see a sick person, and took more cold.

" *Dec.* 7. Rose early; was in a cloudy kind of frame. Visited and prayed with a number of sick people. In the evening was favored with a deep view of the importance and magnitude of the ministry, and had much freedom in crying for grace to help.

" *Dec.* 9. Though I have less sensible comfort, faith seems to be in exercise, and I will still trust in God, though he slay me.

" *Dec.* 10. Was seized with the symptoms of a fever.

" *Dec.* 11. Begin to think seriously that my time is short. My lungs appear to be deeply affected, and the result may be fatal.

" *Dec.* 12. Had a melting season in prayer this morning. Felt viler than the vilest. Spent the evening with my father, who came to attend the ordination.

" *Dec.* 14. My body and mind seemed alike weak and incapable of exertion. My cough increases, and bids fair to terminate in a consumption.

"*Dec.* 15. Rose extremely unwell, and continued so during the day. Could do nothing. In the evening tried to pray, but was soon interrupted by weakness and lassitude.

" *Dec.* 16. ORDINATION. Rose very early, and renewed my covenant with God, taking him for my portion, and giving myself up to him for the work of the gospel ministry. Had considerable assistance in this, and in seeking ministerial qualifications; but my strength failed. Felt in something of a quiet, happy, dependent frame during the public services, especially during the ordaining prayer."

It is peculiarly gratifying to peruse such a record as this last paragraph contains, of the state of his mind on this most solemn and eventful occasion. That a mind so highly susceptible, and so frequently borne down to the very dust by its overwhelming sense of ministerial responsibility, should be preserved in this "quiet, happy, dependent frame," while in the act of assuming the most weighty and momentous of all trusts ever committed to man—of consummating that sacred connection which was to affect the everlasting weal or wo of numerous undying souls—can be ascribed to nothing but the special favor of God. It should be noticed in honor of His faithfulness, who will not desert his devoted servants in any trying emergency. In anticipation of this crisis, and under the responsibilities of the labors which were conducting him to it, he had habitually cast his burden upon the Lord; and by the Lord was that burden sustained. His mind was kept in peace, for it was stayed on God.

"A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." Mr. Payson went to Portland with no expectation, probably, of making that his permanent residence, but merely to supply, temporarily, Mr. Kellogg's pulpit. Mr. K. undoubtedly had a further design in procuring his assistance, even from the first but its accomplishment was suspended on circumstances yet to be developed, and it could not, therefore, be properly disclosed. But when, on experiment he saw the young preacher's labors so well received by the people, and so evidently blessed, he spared no endeavors to retain his valuable services, which he showed himself willing to do at the expense of any reasonable sacrifice.

The ordination sermon was preached by his venerable father, founded on 1 Tim. 5 : 22, *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins*, and well illustrated the apostle's "caution against introducing persons suddenly into the ministry, and the reason with which that caution is enforced."

CHAPTER VIII.

His concern for his flock—reverse in his temporal prospects—is taken from his work by sickness.

Mr. Payson had already exhibited an interest in the welfare of souls, and a desire for their salvation, so great as to seem almost incapable of increase; but, as soon as the pastoral relation was consummated, he regarded those committed to his oversight with an appropriating, an endearing love, which identified their interests and happiness with his own.

"*Dec.* 17, 1807. Was favored with freedom and assistance in writing and prayer, and felt a strong love for the people of my charge. In the evening attended a meeting of those who are under concern, and had some assistance.

"*Dec.* 18. Felt in a sweet, dependent frame, and had liberty to cast myself and parish upon God

" *Dec.* 19. Awoke twice, after a day of excessive fatigue, drenched in a profuse sweat, and concluded that my time was short.

" *Dec.* 20. Sabbath. Extremely weak. Felt as if I could not preach. In the afternoon preached an occasional sermon, and was wonderfully carried through. Blessed be God!

" *Dec.* 21. Had a sweet season in prayer. My soul felt strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. I longed to spend and be spent in his service, and wondered at his astonishing goodness to such an unworthy wretch. Spent the whole day in visiting, with some profit and pleasure. In the evening talked to a number of people on the nature of religion. After returning, found myself much exhausted. Feel convinced that I am in a consumption, and may as well die as cease my exertions."

His illness continued severe for several days, so that he was directed by his physician to keep within. He enjoyed, on the whole, much quietness and resignation, but says, " I longed to be abroad among my people." Dec. 26, ten days after his ordination, he expectorated blood, and " viewed it as his death-warrant, but felt tolerably calm and resigned." Three days later, however, he is found preaching an evening lecture.

The calamities occasioned by the aggressions of foreign belligerents, and by the restrictions imposed on commerce by our own government, fell at this time with peculiar weight upon the inhabitants of Portland. The darkest season through which the United States have passed since their independence, had now commenced. The distresses of the times are the subject of frequent allusion by Mr. Payson in his diary, and are thus described in the following letter to his parents:

"*Portland, Dec.* 28, 1807.

"When my dear father was here, he observed that my prospects were almost too happy for this world. They were so, it appears; for they are now as unfavorable, humanly speaking, as they were then flattering. The prospect of war has produced here such a scene of wretchedness as I never before witnessed. A large number of the most wealthy merchants have already failed, and numbers more are daily following, so that we are threatened with universal bankruptcy. Two failures alone have thrown at least three hundred persons, besides sailors, out of employ; and you may hence conceive, in some measure, the distress which the whole number must occasion. The poor-house is already full, and hundreds are yet to be provided for, who have depended on their own labor for daily bread, and who have neither the means of supporting themselves here, nor of removing into the country. Many, who have been brought up in affluence, are now dependent on the cold courtesy of creditors for a protection from the inclemency of the season. These things, however, are but the beginning of sorrows. As soon as the news of these failures reach ———, every man there, who has a hundred dollars owing to him in Portland, will send down to secure it; and the general stagnation of business is such, that a man who is possessed of ten thousand dollars, in real or personal estate, may not be able to answer a demand of five hundred, though it were to save him from ruin. If these times continue, nine tenths of the people here will be scattered to the four winds. All confidence is lost; no man will trust his neighbor; but every one takes even his brother 'by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.' But I cannot describe, and I doubt whether you can conceive, of the distress we are in.

"And now you will, perhaps, be grieved at this sudden blast of all my fine prospects, and cry, 'Poor Edward!' But you never had more reason to rejoice on my behalf, and to cry, 'Rich Edward!' than now; for, blessed be God, my portion does not stand on such tottering foundations as to be shaken by these commotions. My dear parents, my dear sister, do not feel one emotion of sorrow on my account, but rather join with me in blessing God that he keeps me quiet, resigned, and even happy, in the midst of these troubles. I do not pretend not to feel them, however. All my worldly hopes are apparently destroyed; and many of those who are now ready to be turned into the streets are the dearest friends I have here; not to mention the distress of the poor, who will, in human probability, soon be in a starving condition. In these circumstances it is impossible not to feel. Still, if God is pleased to afford me the same degree of support which he has hitherto, I shall be more happy than ever I was. I thought I knew before, that this world was treacherous, and its enjoyments transitory; but these things have taught me this truth so much plainer, and weaned me so much the more from creature dependences, that I desire to consider them among my chief mercies. It has long been my prayer, that if God had any worldly blessings in store for me, he would be pleased to give me grace instead of them, or change them into spiritual blessings; and now he begins to grant my request. I am sorry for H.'s disappointment, and my own inability to assist pa' out of his difficulties, which I once hoped I should be able to do. But I trust they will be sanctified, if they are not removed. What a blessed portion the believer has in the word of God, if he has only a hand given him to lay hold on it! But too often our hands are withered, and heed not the divine command to stretch them out.

"I tremble for our poor country. I fear the decree has gone out against her. My sins have helped to call down judgments upon her, and I desire to take what falls to my share, and bless God that my punishment is no heavier, and no more proportioned to my deserts. But nothing seems too bad to expect from present appearances. If we escape civil war, it will be well.

"*January* 5, 1808.

"I would not finish my letter before, because I could say nothing favorable respecting my health, which was then worse than ever, but, blessed be God, seems now unaccountably restored. The tumult in town has subsided into a dead calm; the embargo has put a stop to every thing like business, and people have now nothing to do but attend to religion; and we endeavor to give them meetings enough, since they have leisure to attend them. Next week we purpose to keep a town fast on account of our distressed situation. I am not without hopes that these things may be overruled to bring about a more extensive reformation. The attention appears to continue, and we hear of new instances of persons under concern. Feel no uneasiness respecting me. The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. The people are very kind, increasingly so. Some of our young converts have lost their all, and had their houses stripped; and it does my heart good to see them cheerful and quiet under it; while others, who have no God, have lost their reason, or, worried almost incessantly, are apparently dying of a broken heart, or uttering the most bitter and distressing complaints. But it is a heart-rending sight to see those who have no other portion stripped naked of all worldly good. Their gods are taken away, and what have they more?"

' *Jan.* 5. I find myself, from day to day, in the situation of a poor beggar, with nothing to plead but my necessities. In the evening preached to a serious audience, and was greatly encouraged to hope for a reformation more general. Was much drawn out in prayer, both at meeting and after I came home.

"*Jan.* 6. Hope that God is quickening me to run the way of his commandments with a more enlarged heart.

"*Jan.* 10. Preached, and administered the Lord's Supper. Felt entirely exhausted. My constitution seems to be much broken, and a little labor wears me out.

"*Jan.* 13. This day was devoted to fasting and prayer, by the town, on account of the present gloomy appearances.

"*Jan.* 14. Hope the strong workings of corruption I have experienced will make me more humble, and the gracious pardon I have received, more thankful.

"*Jan.* 17. Sab. Was alarmed by cry of fire during family prayer. It did considerable damage, but, by God's goodness, was got under, though the town was in imminent danger. Was much assisted in seeking a divine blessing on all our afflictions. Had no meet ing in the forenoon. In the afternoon preached with some liberty.

"*Jan.* 22. In the evening preached, and was much refreshed and strengthened in my own soul. Found the Lord's work is going on. O what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits!

"*Jan.* 24. Sab. Was favored with a sweet season in pleading for the divine presence. Hoped that God would make this a day of his power and grace. Was greatly assisted. Have lately been favored with more love to God, and zeal for Christ, than I used to have, and feel more compassion for sinners.

"*Jan.* 25. Seem to have some respite from the workings of corruption. Spent the day in visiting my people, and found many somewhat exercised. In the evening attended a conference with inquirers. Found some new cases, and had a pleasant evening.

"*Jan.* 26. Felt eager desires to be wholly conformed to Christ, and to be carried away with the constraining influence of his love.

"*Feb.* 4. Was overwhelmed with wonder, shame, and confusion, to reflect on the innumerable mercies I had received, and the ungrateful returns I had made. In the afternoon preached at the poor-house, and found some of the inmates much affected."

Soon after this he was seized with a violent pleuritic affection, which rendered speaking a most painful and difficult exercise. The pain continued for some time, attended by various discouraging symptoms. He did not neglect to call in medical aid; and the prescriptions of physicians were partially blessed But the moment he felt a little relieved he would resume his labors, "go to a prayer-meeting, take more cold, and come home much worse." Repeatedly during this illness, when he was necessarily confined to his room, he enters a notice of this kind—"Spent almost the whole day in conversing with persons who were exercised with spiritual trials;" and every such day was one of great fatigue, at the close of which "all his alarming symptoms would return with great violence." When his conversation with inquirers was not prolonged to weariness, it proved "refreshing to his spirits." Though he found it "trying to be laid aside as a broken vessel, when the people were willing to hear," he could still bless God for sweet resignation to the divine will. "Could not feel a wish respecting the continuance of my life; but had God referred the matter to me, I should have referred it back again to him. My only wish was—if I lived—to live unto the Lord; and, if I died, to die unto the Lord."

In the latter part of February his physician found it necessary to forbid his preaching for several Sabbaths, and was in a measure successful in enforcing the prohibition, as his patient does not appear to have gone out to any religious meeting for more than a fortnight, when he ventured to "attend a conference with those under concern, where he found several new inquirers, and was carried through beyond expectation." But the exposure was followed by a dangerous relapse, so that he thought his "health irrecoverably gone."

"*March* 26. Had an exceedingly painful night, worse than ever, but had some satisfaction in thinking of going to be with Christ. In the evening was extremely unwell, and suffered great pain.

"*March* 27. Sab. In the morning was very ill, but was carried to meeting in the afternoon, though I could not preach. Was too weak to have much comfort at meeting, and came home very low-spirited.

"*March* 28. Am pretty well convinced that my disease is mortal. My mind partakes so much of the weakness of my body, that I can do nothing in religion, and can scarcely refrain from peevishness and fretting.

"*March* 30. Had a most sweet and refreshing season in secret prayer this morning. Felt more ardent love to Christ than I have for some time, and was sweetly melted under a sense of my own ingratitude. Was resigned to his will respecting me, and was willing to depart and be with him.

"*April* 2. Conversed with some persons who came in to see me, respecting means to be taken for the suppression of profanity and Sabbath-breaking.

"*April* 3. Sab. Was able to attend meeting and preach part of the day. Was favored with some liberty at the sacrament, and had some foretaste of heaven, and desire to enjoy it. Am much afraid the reformation is going off. Was assisted to pray that the work might go on, and also in praying for myself, so that I hope the Lord has been pleased to strengthen me on this occasion.

"*April* 4. Had unusual earnestness in prayer this morning both for myself and others, and was sweetly melted in reading the divine word. Was depressed by finding that the town would do nothing respecting the observance of the Sabbath. Was enabled to pour out my sorrows and complaints before God with some degree of freedom.

"*April* 7. This day being our annual fast, I endeavored to humble myself before God for my personal sins, as well as our public transgressions, to renew covenant with God, and devote myself with new zeal to his service. Was likewise assisted in pleading with God for more grace, and life, and light, in my own soul, and in the souls of my people ; and that the reformation which has begun may be carried on gloriously and triumphantly among us. In the morning attended meeting, and heard a most excellent sermon from Mr. K. In the afternoon preached with some degree of assistance.

"*April* 8. Had a very uncomfortable night, but was sweetly refreshed and strengthened in secret prayer this morning. It is long since I have found so much of the divine presence. Was much assisted in praying for a revival of religion, and cannot but hope God will yet bless us still more abundantly.

"*April* 9. Was employed most of the day in visiting. Was troubled with some who wished to join the church without being qualified.

"*April* 14. Attended a conference for those under concern, and was refreshed to see a goodly number, and to trace the operations of the divine Spirit upon their minds.

"*April* 19. O how sweet and refreshing it is to get above the load of sins, sorrows and corruptions which oppress us, and taste a little of communion with God!

"*April* 20. Was strengthened with all might in the inner man, and enabled to renew covenant with God with great joy and sincerity.

"*April* 21. I have long been in a lethargy, but I trust God is now bringing me out of it. Find great and unusual sweetness in the Bible of late, for which

I have long been praying; and likewise a deeper sense of the importance of time,—another blessing for which I have long been seeking. The enemy taking advantage of my great weakness, threw me into a most sinful frame of mind; but on application to Him who stills the waves, the tumult of my mind was stilled, and there was a great calm.

"*April* 22. Was favored with some intense hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. Was led to believe, from certain circumstances, that my case was almost desperate, but felt most sweetly resigned. My only wish was that God might be glorified, either by my life or death.

"*April* 23. Was assisted in prayer through the day. My heart seemed ready to break with its longings after holiness. Found unusual sweetness in reading the Scriptures. Am much encouraged by the Lord's unusual goodness to me, that he is about to carry on his work still more gloriously in this place.

"*April* 25. Was constrained to feel the truth of our Lord's declaration, 'Without me ye can do nothing.'"

The following paragraphs from letters written during this spring will not be uninteresting:

"*Portland, March* 28. 1808.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"The Sabbath after I wrote to Grata, I preached as I expected; but it proved too much for me, and I have not preached since, nor do I expect to till the weather grows warmer. Meanwhile the attention to religion seems to be at a stand, and whether it will not wholly subside is more than we can tell. I need not say that this is a trial; but, blessed be God, he makes it lighter than I could have thought possible. It is true I have not much sensible or positive comfort; but I am kept perfectly quiet and resigned, and can hardly find whether I have any will or not. Should my health not be perfectly re-established before warm weather, I shall probably make a journey home. The people are abundantly kind, and suffer me to want for nothing which they can supply. Mr. K. is as kind to me as the congregation, and though he is almost overwhelmed with labor, yet he will not suffer me to expose myself in the least.

"Now, after enumerating all these mercies, you will conclude, of course, that I am all wonder and gratitude, and that the constant language of my heart is, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?' That I ought to be so, I am very sensible; but, alas, how far from it I am in reality! I do indeed feel some wonder how God can be so good; such a kind of wonder as we feel when thinking of his eternity or infinite power; but as to gratitude, I hardly know by experience what it means. I once used to think that I did feel grateful, when I had not half the reason for it which I now have; but I have done thinking so. All we can do falls so far short of what we owe, that it seems little better than mockery to thank him in our feeble language, and I can only stand in astonishment to see how good he will be notwithstanding all I can do to prevent it. O how true it is, that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy! I can hardly help praying sometimes, that he would take away all he has bestowed, so that, if I must sin, I need not sin against such overwhelming goodness. But it is as natural for him to be good and kind, as it is for us to abuse his goodness; and sooner shall our wicked hearts cease to sin, than he cease to pardon and forgive sin.

* * * *

"The embargo, humanly speaking, will be detrimental to the morals of the people here. They have now nothing to do but saunter about, and of course they get into all manner of mischief; and I fear they will lose all habits of industry and sobriety. However, if I have any health, we shall endeavor to multiply meetings, and take up as much of their time as possible in that way."

"*Portland, April* 18, 1808.

"Yes, my dearest mother, I did think of my friends at Rindge, when I apprehended I was about to leave them. They were almost, if not altogether, the only things that I felt the least regret at the idea of quitting; but that regret was alleviated, if not wholly removed, by the consoling hope that I should soon meet them again, to be separated no more. But, my dear mother, why this anxiety? If I wished for life, it would distress me exceedingly to see you thus anxious, because I should fear it would lead God to remove from you one for whom you indulge so much concern. I shall certainly live as long as I have any thing to do for the divine glory; for "we are immortal till our work is done;" and you surely could not wish me to live after that is accomplished. Ever since I have entertained a comfortable hope of my acceptance in the Beloved, it has been my constant wish that what I had to do might be done speedily;

and if God should see fit to grant this wish, will it not be better than if I should be a long time in performing the work allotted, and drag on a wearisome life to no purpose? It was my great consolation, while taken off from active service, and laid aside as a broken vessel and a foot out of joint, that we may glorify God as much by patiently suffering, as by actively doing his will; and I hope this consolation will be yours, should he see fit to appoint me a life of weakness, pain and suffering, or remove me first from this state of trial. It is a striking proof of our depravity, that when God favors us with special mercies, he sees it necessary to send special afflictions, to teach us our dependence and keep us humble. Could I have continued suitably humble and thankful under the mercies I have lately received with respect to my settlement here, and the out-pourings of the Spirit, he never would have frustrated, first, my temporal prospects, and afterwards, by sickness, as it were cast me out of his vineyard, as an unworthy and an unfaithful laborer. But I not only deserved, but indispensably needed all that has befallen me; and I desire to bless him for these afflictions, by which, when my roots began to shoot into and cleave to the earth, he plucked them up before they were too deeply and firmly fixed, and thus experimentally taught me not to look for or expect any happiness beyond that of serving him here but to wait for my reward in another world; a lesson of infinite importance, and which I greatly needed. But it is a lesson so hard for us, or at least for me, to learn, that I well foresee, if I am continued here any length of time, it will be necessary for God to impress it upon my mind again and again by repeated and multiplied disappointments. My disposition is naturally so ardent, that I can enjoy nothing with moderation, so that I must either be totally indifferent to worldly objects, or else love them to such a degree as to render them idols; and then, of course, God must and will either imbitter or remove them. It is evident, therefore, that I must not expect worldly happiness; for perfect indifference to any object, or too much love for it, are equally incompatible with happiness and these are the only two states of which I am capable. For this reason I fear ever to enter the marriage state, for I should most certainly love a wife too much or too little. I know not, however, whether I ought to regret this trait in my character, since, by cutting me off from other sources, it does, as it were, necessarily drive me to One whom I cannot love or serve too much, and compel me to place all my hopes in a future state. . . .

"Since you complain that I did not tell you what my sickness has been, I will now inform you, lest you should suppose it worse than it was. It was an inflammation of the lungs and adjoining parts, attended for several weeks with extreme debility, sharp pain, restlessness, loss of appetite, difficulty of breathing, and an inability to converse for any time together. I should, I believe, have easily got over it, but I continued my labors much too long, hoping I should be able to drag along till warm weather, which, I trusted, would restore me. But after sacrament, when, by reason of the length of the services, I was so exhausted that I could scarcely sit in my chair, I was obliged to go out in a cold, raw evening, to converse and pray with a dying sailor, who had just found out that he had a soul to save The next day was a violent storm, in which I imprudently went out to visit some sick persons, and the day following was seized with a sharp pleuritic pain in my side. However, as it was lecture night, I was obliged to preach, which I got through with much pain and some difficulty, but was then constrained to give up. Still I believe my confinement would have been much shorter, had not persons continued to come and converse with me who were under concern. I could not find it in my heart to send them away, and the temporary exhilaration of spirits, which seeing them gave me, prevented me from finding out at first how much talking injured me, so that, for a long time, I lost much faster than I gained. But the sun seems to be a physician superior to all the doctors, and his warm beams, under God, have in a good measure restored me.

> 'Thus have I spent my health—an odious trick
> 'In making known how oft I have been sick.'

But if your patience is wearied, you must ascribe it to your own request, without which I should not have said a syllable on the subject."

The "inflammation," he observes in another letter, "was brought on by speaking in hot rooms, and then going out into the cold evening air." His illness proved, on the whole, a serious one; and he was obliged not only to suspend preaching, but to leave the scene of his labors, before he could obtain relief. On the 27th of April he set out for his father's house, to try the effect of a journey and a country residence on his health. "In crossing a stream, whose bridge had been carried away, he was thrown from his horse and thoroughly wet, so that he could proceed no farther.' The next day, "after riding about ten miles, he was seized with the symptoms of a violent fever, and obliged to stop and take his bed." The third day he pursued his journey moderately, but "in much pain and weakness, fearing that his lungs had been much injured by his late accident." Before night of the fourth day he "was extremely exhausted." "Find," he says, "that a fever comes on at night, and goes off with sweats in the morning." The next day was the Sabbath, which he spent in Milford, "weak in body and mind. After meeting, which he attended both parts of the day, had some conversation with a universalist, but to little purpose." "May 2. Reached home, and was most kindly received. After the flow of spirits occasioned by seeing friends was over, found myself much exhausted with my journey."

For several days after his arrival he grew worse, till he "lost all strength and appetite," and was taken with a "hectic fever," as was then supposed, "attended with night sweats and some cough. He gave up all hope of recovering, and felt willing to die; had no murmuring thought."

CHAPTER IX.

Resumes his pastoral labors—Letters—Review of the year.

Mr. Payson's absence from his people was prolonged to a period of more than two months. During this time he endured much bodily suffering; but his resignation, and his demeanor generally, were such as became a man professing godliness. He obtained no relief till near the close of this period, when he repaired to Boston for medical advice, by which he was encouraged to hope that he might again engage in preaching the Gospel. His church observed a day of fasting and prayer on his account during his absence. He set out on his return to them July 4th, not without "gloomy melancholy fears. The work appeared great, the obstacles insurmountable, and his strength nothing." Most of the information which could be collected respecting his circumstances for several succeeding months, is contained in letters that were written to his parents and sister.

" *Portland, Wednesday evening, July* 6, 1808.

' MY DEAREST PARENTS,

" When you see *where* and *when* this letter is dated, you will, I fear, be ready to exclaim, ' Imprudent boy! why will he not learn wisdom by experience?' But when you hear that no ill consequences have resulted from my haste, you will, I hope, pardon me. The truth is, when I got beyond the reach of the attraction of Rindge, which was not very soon, Portland began to draw with such irresistible force, that I found there would be no peace for me till I reached it. So, maugre my lame horse, who grew lamer and lamer every hour, I pressed on, and arrived here about six this afternoon. How it will be to-morrow I cannot tell; but at present I am perfectly well. and never was less fatigued by a journey in my life Mr. K. is out of town, attending an association, and my host, with his wife, is absent on a visit; so as yet I have seen nobody.

" *Thursday morning.*

" The crowd of anxious and interesting thoughts which engaged my mind on my return would not suffer me to rest much last night, and of course I feel rather languid this morning. Still, however, I never felt less inconvenience from such a journey. Mr. K. has just left me. He gives a discouraging account of the situation of religion. Several, whose convictions appeared to be of the right kind, have apparently lost them, and a general coldness seems to be prevailing.

" *Thursday night.*

" Perhaps you saw lately an account of a man who was tried here for murder. He was found guilty, and is now in prison. I went this afternoon to visit him, and was greatly shocked and afflicted by a view of the bolts, chains, and other guards against escape. The entrance to his dungeon was by a small square passage, through which I could but just crawl by stooping double, and it was secured by a very thick door of solid iron. It was, however, sufficiently light, sweet, and free from dampness. The criminal is a young, stout, well-looking man, as far removed as possible from the idea one is ready to form of a murderer. He said he felt guilty, and self-condemned before God, and felt the need of a Savior, and of a new heart, but knew not how to procure either of them. But he said this in a cold, unfeeling way I shall see him again soon, for my own sake, as well as his. It is well calculated to make one admire and adore distinguishing grace, which has kept us from the same crimes, to see a man, in the flower of life, shut up in a small dungeon, never to go out till he goes to a violent and ignominious death. In the evening I went to our meeting for those under concern. This is still kept up, though very few attend, and they seem little engaged.

"*Friday.*

"I have been trying the effect of sea-bathing. It was not a very favorable time, but I feel better for it, and shall repeat it daily. I have spent some time in going round among the people. They appear glad to see me; but, alas! I fear there are no hopes of any further reformation at present. Many, whom I left under deep concern, have lost all their impressions; others are cold; Christians seem to be discouraged. Though I expected this, it is almost too much for me to bear. I am dispirited and dejected; my very soul sickens and shrinks back from what is before me. Weakened by sickness, my mind seems to have lost at once all faith and fortitude. I have no assistance in writing. My ideas are all confused. I seem to have no power to get hold of people's consciences, but, as somebody expresses it, 'my intellects have got mittens on.'

"*Sunday evening.*

"I preached to-day, and felt pretty much as I expected. No life, people stupid. I shall get hardened to these things soon; but at present they are distressing indeed. But though I am perplexed, I am not utterly in despair; though cast down, I am not destroyed. Somehow or other, I shall be carried through. As to my health, I have little leisure to think of it amidst the more interesting things which oppress me. I believe, however, I shall suffer but little inconvenience from speaking to-day."

"*Portland, July* 16, 1808.

"My dear Sister,

"I know not why it was, but I never felt more pain at leaving home, since I first began to venture abroad, than when I left Rindge for Portland. I rode in a very melancholy mood all day, and seldom have I felt more unpleasantly. This, you will say, was but an ungrateful return to my heavenly Father for his goodness; but, though I felt sensible that it was, I could not alter the course of my feelings. My mind had become so tender by being accustomed to kindness and attention that it seemed to shrink from every thing like coldness, and it was in vain to expect that kindness from others which I experienced from parental and sisterly affection at home. The difficulties, too, of the ministry were all before me. Like Peter, I looked only at the waves and billows, forgetting the almighty arm that was extended for my support; and consequently like him, I sunk in the depths of despondency. Nor is the prospect, now I am here, calculated to cheer me. Iniquities abound; the love of many is waxen cold; the enemy seems coming in as a flood; the Spirit of the Lord no longer lifts up a standard against him; and I, what can I do? What is worst of all, is, that many are ready to think that, because I am returned, religion will revive. This sickens and discourages my very soul; for I know assuredly, that, while this is the case, my labors will be utterly unsuccessful. This shows, too, that they have not learnt, by my sickness what God meant they should learn, and will bring a blast upon me and my exertions. Still, however, blessed be God, he does not suffer me utterly to despair. That text, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"—never fails to bring relief even in the darkest hours. In addition to this, I find some relief in conversing with those who were taken into the church before I left them, most of whom seem to be humble, growing Christians; so that I have still abundant reason to be thankful; but, alas! I cannot. You, my sister, never will know what it is to attempt to go through the duties of the ministry without God. I stagger along under the burden like those poor travelers who were cast away in the deserts of Arabia, ready every step to sink under it; but when it seems as if I could not take another step, but must lie down and die, some spring opens to my view, and I get strength and courage to drag along a little farther.—But enough of this melancholy strain. My health continues to improve rapidly, and I am almost perfectly well."

"*Portland, August* 3, 1808.

"MY DEAREST PARENTS,

"I had almost resolved not to write again till I received letters from home, which I have been looking for with much impatience and some hard thoughts; but, lest you should impute my silence to a wrong cause, I will put an end to it for the present, and tell you that I am gradually growing better, and am, in a manner, perfectly well. I preach in all weathers, and at all hours, without much, if any, inconvenience, and still gain strength notwithstanding; and the people say that I speak now as loud and strong as ever, though I did not when I first came back. I have also thrown off my melancholy fits, and am as cheerful as ever. The state of religion, however, is not such as I could wish.

"I preached last Sabbath on man's depravity, and attempted to show, that, by nature, man is, in stupidity and insensibility, a block; in sensuality and sottishness, a beast; and in pride, malice, cruelty, and treachery, a devil. This set the whole town in an uproar, and never was such a racket made about any poor sermon; it is perfectly inconceivable to any who have not seen it. But I cannot help hoping, that, amidst all this smoke, there may be some latent sparks which will burst out into a blaze. We had a lecture last evening in the meeting-house, which was much more crowded than any we ever had before. However, our fears are, as yet, much greater than our hopes."

The sermon alluded to in this letter is probably one which he preached from John, 8 : 44, and which is still remembered with lively impression by some of the hearers, whose account of its effects amply sustains his own description. In the course of the following week there might be heard one man hailing another in the street as "brother devil!" This, coming to Mr. Payson's ears, so far from being regarded as a circumstance of discouragement, inspired him with the hope that good would ultimately result from it—a hope which the event justified; for some of these "brave spirits" were afterwards humbled at the foo of the cross. His description of the "natural man" is given in terms which he repeatedly applies to himself in his private journal; and his severest expressions were uttered with the moving tenderness of a heart that yearned over the guilt and impending misery of his fellow-men. The wounds he inflicted were "the wounds of a friend." Those on whom his strokes fell with deadliest effect, could not but feel that benevolence aimed the blow.

"*August* 10.

"I have just received your letter, my dear mother and will now put an end to mine, which a press of duty had made me lay by. Mr. K. has been called to part with a beloved child, which has thrown a great deal of business upon my hands. He is going a journey soon, and I must finish visiting the people before he goes, as I shall have no time afterwards. Your letter afforded me some comfort at a time when I needed it. We have lost all hopes of any more attention at present, and I am in some measure reconciled to it; for if a revival should take place immediately after my return, people would not give God the glory. The opposition grows more and more bitter; every mouth seems to be opened to revile, and Christians, instead of supporting me, seem to think that it will not do to tell the whole truth, lest the world should be too much offended. I was prone to trust to Christians, and think that, though all should be offended, yet they would not; but I find it will not do to put trust in man, however good he may be. Even Christians had much rather hear of their privileges, their good estate, and the happiness prepared for them, than be told plainly how defective they are, and urged to greater diligence, zeal, and fidelity. I think sometimes, that all the service I shall do the church will be to change them from legal to evangelical hypocrites; for they have now got their cue, and, instead of saying that they do all they can, and hope Christ will do the rest, they are all complaining, like Mrs. ********, what dreadful vile creatures they are, and smile all the time.

"However, there are some who make these complaints in a different manner, and who appear really to groan under a body of sin and death. One person, who was esteemed by Mr. K. and the whole church, and by myself too, not only a Christian, but a very eminent one, of whose religion I had not the least doubt, and who appeared to be very humble and broken-hearted, and, in short, to be every thing we could wish, has discovered that she was building on the sand. She had been a professor some time, but had never heard of or suspected the difference between holy and selfish love, and is now fully convinced that all her love was of the latter kind. As she possesses good sense and information, the accounts she gives of her experiences, while destitute of religion, are very profitable, and open new ways in which persons may be deceived, of which I had scarcely any conception."

"*Portland, September* 8, 1808.

"MY DEAREST PARENTS,

"Last Sabbath I preached all day, administered the sacrament, catechised the children, and spent the evening in conversation; and yet, instead of being laid up, as I feared, I am full as well, if not better than before. Things still remain pretty much as they were. A great many seem to be somewhat alarmed, but I see none of those deep convictions of sin which I used to see; it is only the mere workings of natural fear. Two persons, however, who had entirely lost their convictions, have had them return more strongly than ever; so that we are not entirely deserted. People seem to be a little better reconciled to the truth, and several, who threatened to leave the congregation, still remain quiet; but whether their quietness proceeds from mere stupidity, or from a conviction of the truth, I know not. The church seem to feel the general deadness; and, as to myself, I seem palsied to all good, though pride, or selfishness, or habit, still keeps me in motion. I have had far more distressing experience of the dreadful depravity of my nature, since I left home, than ever before. O the heights and depths, the lengths and breadths, of wickedness in the depraved heart! If complaining to man was of service, what a torrent of complaint could I pour out! But it will not avail.

"*Sept.* 14.

"Mr. C. a young gentleman of independent fortune, is now preaching in the old parish. He has been studying divinity in Scotland, and preaches the doctrines of the Gospel in a clear, distinguishing manner. As his sentiments were known before he came, every thing was said to take off the effect of his preaching, which could be said. They cannot, however, accuse him of interested motives in preaching; and, as he is quite a gentleman in his manners, I hope he will lessen the prejudices of some of his fashionable hearers against the Gospel.

"We have had three additions to the church, since my return, of persons who gave very satisfactory evidence; and there are a few other gleanings of our late harvest that are not yet gathered in; but, otherwise, we are in a most stupid state. If I now and then feel a spark of life, the moment I go abroad among my people it goes out, and I always come home quite discouraged. I cannot feel thankful as I ought for health restored.

"*Oct.* 10.

'Mr. K. comes back this week, and my hard duty is over without any ill consequences. I have had some relief of late, from Mr. C.'s being here, at the old parish, and preaching such doctrine as I do."

In the following letter to his mother is a most vivid sketch of the workings of his mind in his hours of discouragement, as well as of those considerations by which he was assisted to rise above it. It will be read with thrilling interest:*

"*Portland, Oct.* 25, 1808.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"I have just received your letter of the 19th, and, like all your letters, it came just in the right time, when I needed it most,—when I was sinking, fainting under discouragements and difficulties. I feel the force of all you say. I know I have every reason in the world to feel grateful; but this knowledge only renders me more unhappy that I cannot feel it. Gratitude is a plant that my heart will never produce, only when Heaven is pleased to place it there; and whether I shall ever exercise one emotion of it again seems doubtful.

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* His letters to his mother can only be correctly understood by considering that he had unbounded confidence at once in her intelligence and piety, and her intimate acquaintance with his own spiritual joys and conflicts; and addressed her with the most perfect familiarity and confidence, in language that well conveyed to her his meaning, though perhaps liable to misconception by others.

"God is showing me what is in my heart in a tenfold clearer light than ever before; and though I know he does it to humble and prove me, that he may do me good in the latter end; yet, while he permits, my mind will be like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt; and I can no more still it than I can still the elements. I know how I ought to feel, and I know how wrong it is to feel as I do; but that does not help me to feel otherwise. I know that I am every thing that is bad summed up in one, and that I deserve, ten thousand times over, the hottest place in hell; but till God shall be pleased to melt my heart by the returning beams of his love, this sight of sin only hardens my heart, and sinks it down in sullen indolence and despair. I loathe and detest myself for having such a temper, and know that my inability to restrain it, instead of being any excuse, only renders me utterly inexcusable. I know, too, that all this is necessary for my good. I know Christ is near me, though I cannot perceive him; and that, in his own time, which will be the best time, he will pluck me out of this terrible deep pit, and set my feet on a rock. But this knowledge does not prevent my being tossed hither and thither before the blast of temptation, like a leaf before a whirlwind. Meanwhile I have nowhere to look for comfort, either in heaven or earth. My prayer seems to be shut out, though in reality I know it is not. My people are raving about my hard doctrine; my friends seem to stand aloof, my health begins to decline, religion decaying, and my heart full of sin. While this is the case, what can reasoning or arguments avail? Who but He who caused light to shine out of darkness, can bring light and order out of the darkness and chaos of my soul?

"Your hopes with respect to Mr. C. are frustrated. Notwithstanding he combined almost every advantage, such as being independent in property, eloquent, polished in his manners, &c. &c. he had only thirty *for*, to ninety *against* him. Mr. R. has a unanimous call at Gorham; but he feels afraid to settle, because he is not qualified. I tell him to settle by all means; for, if he waits a little longer, he never will feel qualified to settle at all. If I had waited till this time, I surely should never have been a minister. I should give up now, but whenever I think of it, something seems to say, 'What are you going to give up for? Supposing you are a poor, miserable, blind, weak, stupid worm of the dust, with mountains of opposition before you—is that any reason for discouragement? Have you yet to learn that God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and that, if you had the talents of an angel, you could do nothing without his assistance? Has he not already helped you beyond all you dared ask or think; and has not he promised to help you in future? What then would you, poor, weak, stupid, cowardly sinner, have more?—what do you keep murmuring about all the time? Why don't you glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you?' To all this I can answer nothing, and so I keep dragging on, because I dare not leave off without a discharge.

"We have still a few inquirers, and one or two have joined the church every communion, which is once a month. The church continue to attend private meetings diligently. We know of four old professors who have been building on sand, but now, I hope, are on Christ; but we have still a wretched set. One was yesterday found to be intemperate who has been a professor several years.

"I am not quite so well as I have been, but am as well as when I left home, and might have been better, if I could learn any prudence."

His filial love suffered no abatement in consequence of his growing years and increased cares. How eager he was to relieve a father's burdened spirit, will be seen in the following letter of condolence:

"*Portland*, *November* 13, 1808.

"MY DEAREST FATHER,

"Yours of the 1st instant I received yesterday, and its contents gave me no little uneasiness. I am grieved that such depravity should be displayed by one so young,* and that such an addition should be made to your cares and sorrows. How I long, how I should rejoice, to say something that would comfort you, my dear father; something that would tend to lighten the burden of life which you mention! but, alas! I am a miserable comforter, and cannot even comfort myself.

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* He refers to a young female domestic, who set fire to his father's house.

I have been preaching to-day on Isaiah, 40 : 1, *Comfort ye*, &c. on account of some who are afflicted with various troubles; and in trying to comfort them I obtained the first drop of consolation which I have tasted for many days; and I would gladly share it with you or rather give you all, if in my power. But I dare no presume to point out to you the springs of consolation which the Gospel affords, and at which you have often drank and been refreshed. But if I were writing to another, I would ask, What burden can be heavy to one who has Omnipotence for his support? Is there not balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Is there any anguish which this balm cannot alleviate? any wound which this Physician cannot heal? I would ask, Can he need comfort who knows that he belongs to the friends and people of God? that his sins are forgiven, and that his name is written in the Lamb's book of life? Is it not strong consolation, consolation sufficient to support the soul under the severest trials, to know that you are washed, justified, and sanctified by the blood of the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit of your God? that there is laid up for you, in heaven, a crown of glory, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away? and that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall ever be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus your Lord? Is it not comfort sufficient to satisfy even the boundless desires of an immortal mind, to know that you are a temple of the Holy Ghost, a member of Christ, and a child of God? that the blessed angels are your guards and attendants? that the Holy Spirit is your Assistant and Sanctifier? the Son of God your

Friend, your Shepherd, your Intercessor, and Head? and God himself your Father, your God, and your exceeding great reward? Is it not enough to know that your salvation standeth sure, and that heaven is as certainly yours as if you already stood on Mount Zion, singing the praises of redeeming love? Is it not enough to know that all things shall work together for your good, through time and eternity? and that he who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, will with him also freely give us all things? In some such manner as this I would write to an equal, to one whose progress in religion was small, whose trials were light, and whose views of divine things were partial and confined, like my own. But to you, my dear father, I dare not write thus, for you know these things already; and you have doubtless spiritual trials, of which I can as yet form no conception, and under which, consequently, I know not how even to try to comfort you. But is it not some satisfaction to reflect, that to you and my mother I shall be indebted, under God, for everlasting felicity; and that, if I am made the instrument of doing any good in the world, it will be owing to your prayers, precepts, and example? My dear father, how many have all your trials, and none of your comforts—no God to go to, no religion to support them, no hopes of heaven, no divine consolations to soothe their sorrows in this valley of tears! Do, then, let us persuade you to be happy; for you have been the means of great good and happiness to us.

"I dare not read over what I have written, and I am almost afraid to send it; for I write in a hurry, and much exhausted, both in body and mind, by the labors of the day; but I write with a most ardent desire to give you a moment's pleasure; and though I fear I shall not succeed, yet I hope the intention will be accepted. I am unfit to write, for it is very late, and I am very sleepy, very much tired, and my head aches; but if I did not write now, I must wait some time, and I know not how to wait a single day, without expressing my sorrow for your new troubles, though unable to remove them.

"My health remains nearly the same as when I wrote last. I am not better, and I know not that I am worse. I shall not fail to let you know the worst, as I promised to do. You need therefore be under no apprehensions that I am worse than I represent. The state of religion continues much the same, only the line seems to be drawing between the friends and the enemies of Christ. The word is to some a savor of life unto life; but to many a savor of death unto death. Many among us seem to be literally mad upon their idols; but the church seem to be growing in grace. There is a society among them, who have two prayer-meetings weekly, besides a monthly fast. The young converts, as yet, promise fair."

Mr. Payson's pastoral labors, during the first year, though much interrupted by sickness, were nevertheless successful, and, by the blessing of God, issued in an accession of twenty-nine members to the church. His sermon, at the first anniversary of his ordination, was founded on 2 Cor. 2:15, 16, in which he illustrated, in a very lucid and solemn manner, the propositions, that, "to those who are saved, the preaching of the Gospel is a savor of life unto life;" that, "to those who perish, it is a savor of death unto death;" and that "the labors of those who preach it are in both cases acceptable to God." In the application of his discourse, after recognizing, with much feeling, his ordination vows, and the changes, by death and otherwise, which had occurred in the society, he acknowledges that their conduct to him "has been such as not only to afford no cause of complaint, but to merit and excite his warmest gratitude, and most earnest prayers and endeavors to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare. The patience with which you have borne with the infirmities occasioned by a long and debilitating illness; the diligence and attention with which you have listened to the ministrations of the word, both in season and out of season; and the many proofs of kindness and regard, equally unexpected and undeserved, which you have displayed,—are too deeply impressed on the heart and memory of the speaker ever to be forgotten, and will render it no less his pleasure and delight, than it is his duty wholly to spend and be spent in your service. But merely to hear the messages of God attentively, and to treat with kindness those who bring them, is not sufficient; for not the hearers, but the doers of the word shall be justified.

"Permit me, therefore, to ask whether you, my friends, have done more than this? According to the measure of ability given me, I have endeavored plainly to declare unto you the whole counsel of God; and though, through an anxious desire to strip off all disguise from the truth, and prevent, so far as possible, all error and mistake, the speaker may have expressed himself unguardedly, and only irritated where he meant to convince, yet still it is *the truth* which he has proclaimed. And we would ask you, most seriously and affectionately, whether it has been to your souls a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death?

"Light as it may appear to us, it is, my friends, a dreadful thing to trifle with the law and gospel of Jehovah. Nor can a greater curse befall a people, than to hear his word, if they neglect to perform it. A flood of waters, or a deluge of fire, is comparatively a blessing. There are, doubtless, many such triflers here, who fully resolve, at some future time, to repent and believe the Gospel. But on what are your hopes founded? Salvation is now more distant from you than ever. For years you have been hardening in sin. Every sermon you have heard has insensibly rendered you worse. You have already heard every motive, argument, and consideration which the Scriptures afford; and heard them in vain. The whole storehouse of spiritual medicines has been thrown open for your relief, but your moral diseases, instead of being healed, have become more inveterate. We can only present to you again the same remedies which have already proved unsuccessful; for the art of man and the word of God afford no other. Humanly speaking, then, it is evident you must perish. But though your recovery is thus impossible with man, it is not with God. Blessed be his name! there is yet balm in Gilead, and a Physician there who can heal when mortal physicians fail. But, alas! you will not apply to him. You will not believe you are sick; you will not be persuaded to seek eternal life You still go on to neglect the Gospel; and perhaps this very warning will prove to some of you a savor of death unto death. My friends how trying is the situation of the ministers of Christ if they have any love for their people, or regard for their souls! They are like a man placed on the brink of a precipice, to warn travelers, that, if they proceed, they will inevitably be dashed in pieces. The travelers arrive, listen to the warning, and then, with a few exceptions, hold on their course, and perish before the eyes of him who labored in vain to save them.

" Such, but infinitely more distressing, is our situation. We stand at the entrance of the way of life, to warn our people that they are in the broad road to destruction, and to urge and entreat them to turn aside and be happy. Many of them hear our entreaties with some degree of attention and regard. They engage our affections by kind offices; we labor with them, tell them they are deeply rooted in our hearts and affections; and then, in defiance of all our prayers and tears, they hurry away and perish before our eyes, in a manner too dreadful to be conceived. If this be not agony, disappointment, and distress, what is? The agonies of a patriot, trembling for his country—of a wife, watching an expiring husband—or of a mother, trembling for a diseased child—are nothing to those which he must feel who knows the worth of an immortal soul, who considers what it is to be lost, and yet sees his people perishing before him.

" O my friends, my dear friends! how do our spirits droop, and our hearts sicken with anguish and despair, when we consider, that, notwithstanding all we can do, many here present will finally find the Gospel a savor of death unto death! and all our exertions will answer no other purpose than to increase, beyond conception, their misery and guilt! O ye precious, immortal souls! ye spirits that will never die! ye heirs of eternity hear!—and obey, ere it is too late, the joy ful sound of the Gospel. O, if there be any avenue to conviction, tell us where it lies. Tell, O tell us, how we may draw, or drive, or lead you to Christ. Tell us how we may bribe you not to be miserable for ever. Almost are we ready to say with the apostle—We could even wish ourselves accursed from Christ for our people, our friends according to the flesh."

CHAPTER X.

His dependence on God; its influence on himself and church—His uniform purpose to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified—Illustration—Letters—Resolutions—Increased success.

THE preparation of his first anniversary sermon, from which some extracts have been taken, was attended by long-continued and intense private devotion; and in preaching it, he "had much assistance, and many were in tears." He looked forward through the year to come with the same prayerful solemnity which distinguished his retrospect of the past. In view of his amazing responsibilities, he went for aid "to the throne of grace; and" he exclaims—"O the unspeakable goodness and condescension of God!—did not go in vain." His complaints still hung like a clog to him, so that his body could but partially serve the ever-active spirit by which it was animated. This calamity was at no time more trying than when it prevented him from preaching his usual Thursday evening lecture. On one such evening he makes this record:

"*Dec.* 30. Had a sweet season in prayer this morning; and felt fervent love to my Savior, and desires that he might be glorified. Was much assisted in writing upon a subject which led me to insist upon the constraining power of Christ's love; and, blessed be God, I was enabled in some measure to feel my subject. Was prevented from preaching by the weather and the state of my health; which was a great disappointment."

It was Mr. Payson's uniform, if not invariable practice, to use a written sermon on one part of every Sabbath; and yet it is worthy of particular observation how much he sought and valued divine assistance *in preaching*. His dependence on the Spirit's aid was, apparently, as real and exclusive as if he had made no previous preparation. He was greatly distressed when engaged in pronouncing a discourse, unaccompanied with a consciousness of such assistance, and proportionately grateful when favored with it. A single extract will exhibit his feelings on this subject:

——"*Sabbath.* Preached without the least apparent assistance. Was so distressed that I left the sermon unfinished, and felt as if the people would leave the house. Went home, feeling ashamed to look any body in the face. Was ready to give up in despair, ... and had scarcely any hope that I should ever again behold the light of God's countenance. Yet such is the inconceivable goodness of God to his perverse and froward children, that he was pleased, even then, to melt my stubborn heart with the displays of his love. Felt so overwhelmed with a sense of his goodness and my own ingratitude, that I could not look up, or hardly venture to throw myself at his feet. My heart was broken within me, to think that I should still ungratefully requite such infinite goodness."

If this reliance on God for help in preaching was not peculiar to him, but common—as it probably is in a degree—to every evangelical minister, the knowledge of the fact would perhaps weaken, if not remove the prejudice which exists in many minds against any use of "notes" by a preacher.

His diary, during this winter, bears the marks of a rapidly advancing maturity in the Christian life. Who would not emulate the state of mind which is thus described!

—— "Was favored with clear views of the matchless goodness of Christ, and my own vileness. Was so overwhelmed and astonished that he should again look upon me with favor, that I could scarce believe it possible. Seemed to be drawn away from self, and to feel more desire that God should be glorified than that I should be happy. This is the only heaven I aspire to; and to have such a temper appeared more desirable than ten thousand worlds. Felt sweetly broken-hearted and grieved to think how I had sinned against such a Savior, and thought I should be willing to undergo any sufferings, if I might never offend him again. Longed to see him glorified by others; for I almost despaired of ever glorifying him myself."

And who, that reads the following, and is informed that similar records continue to occur at short intervals, will any longer wonder that success crowned his labors? The first extract shows that the duties which he urged on others were first practiced by himself:

"*Jan.* 2, 1809. Rose very early, and enjoyed a sweet season in secret prayer. Spent the day in visiting. In the evening felt the worth of souls lie with peculiar weight upon my mind, and was enabled to wrestle fervently for divine influence.

"*Jan.* 3. Was favored this morning with such a view of the worth of souls, that I could not rest at home, but went out to visit my people, and stir up the members of the church to pray for divine influences. Never felt such love for the people of God as this day. Seemed willing to wash their feet, or perform the lowest offices, because they belonged to Christ. Longed all day to do something for the glory of God and the conversion of sinners. Wished for health, that I might employ my time for God."

A heart so intent upon seeking the salvation of men might well be supposed to dictate language like the following, when the tenement in which it was lodged was too feeble to be removed from its resting-place.

"*Jan.* 7. During the past week the word of the Lord has been like a fire shut up in my bones. I long o preach, but cannot. O that I may be patient and esigned!"

The minister, who furnishes appropriate employment for the members of his church, performs one of the most useful services connected with human agency, and is the least likely to labor in vain and spend his strength for naught. A conviction of personal responsibility for the prosperity of religion, deeply fixed in the heart of every private Christian—a responsibility which all are but too ready to throw off upon their minister—will, if any thing can, render them circumspect, "instant in prayer," and "always abounding in the work of the Lord." It is one of the best preparations for hearing the word with profit: for with it they will listen, not to cavil, not to be amused, but for edification, and that they may learn "what the Lord would have them do." The pastor, who is sustained by the daily fervent prayers of his flock, and by their frequent united prayers, has a ground for encouragement and hope that will not fail him. The Spirit will not leave that people unvisited, who so appreciate his influences as to seek them daily with ardor of desire, and to whom their descent would be as welcome and as refreshing "as cold waters to a thirsty soul." It was, therefore, a well-advised step in Mr. Payson, to engage the prayers of the church for a blessing on the word dispensed by him, and for a general revival of religion. The great importance of the duty justified his special exertions to secure its performance, and both he and they had much reason to rejoice in the issue.

"*Portland*, *Jan.* 10, 1809.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"I have been for some time endeavoring to establish among us what are called 'Aaron and Hur Societies,' *i. e.* little collections of four, five, or more persons, to meet before service on Sabbath morning, and spend an hour in praying for a blessing on the minister and ordinances. They began new year's day, and we seemed to have an immediate answer; for the meeting was unusually solemn, and we have reason to hope the word was not preached in vain. Our hopes of another revival are increasing, as there seems to be an unusual spirit of prayer, and several persons have lately been awakened. However, God's ways are not as our ways, and we may be disappointed. Indeed, it seems impossible to me that there should be any attention so long as I am here. I am harassed with such violent temptations, from morning till night, and from night till morning, with scarce a moment's intermission, that I am utterly weary of life, and ready to despair. It seems as if I must one day perish by the hands of this accursed Saul, which seeks to destroy me. When I have a moment's ease, the word of the Lord is like a fire shut up in my bones, and it seems as if I must preach, if I die for it, even to stocks and stones, if men will not hear; and yet I can only preach once on the Sabbath, and am obliged to refrain all the week. This sets melancholy to work, and gives the adversary great advantage over me. Yet I appear to know it is all right and necessary; but this knowledge does not comfort and strengthen me as it ought. Truly the righteous scarcely are saved; and we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Still however, externally, my cup runs over with blessings. My people are so kind it makes me utterly ashamed, and Mr. K. is like a father to me in every thing. But, instead of feeling grateful, and being able to glorify God for his goodness, I am so overwhelmed with temptations that I can do nothing but sit still and tremble lest they hurry me into some open sin, which will bring dishonor on the cross. O my dearest mother, do pity me, and pray for me; for I am sifted like wheat."

The customs of society often render a minister's presence unavoidable on public occasions, or celebrations of a nature not easily defined, but which are of a mixed character, partly secular and partly religious. But Mr. Payson would never degrade his official character. Wherever he was present, there the ambassador of Christ "stood confest." He never would consent to be the mere amusing companion, or entertaining speaker. Those whom he addressed, whatever the occasion, were reminded that they were probationers for eternity. Very pleasing evidence of this has been found in some copious remnants of a performance, which, in March of this year, he addressed to a Musical Society. Who would look for a proof of the existence and perfections of God on such an occasion? for a history of the apostacy of angels—of the fall and recovery of man—and of the ultimate destination and employment of redeemed sinners? Yet all this, "in strains as sweet as angels use," was wrought into an address on music. Were it his object to pronounce an encomium on Music, he might, he observes in the introduction, from the ample materials furnished by orators, poets, historians, and philosophers of past ages, "easily compose a rich and unfading wreath of applause, with which to encircle and adorn her brows." But,

"Without resorting to the hyperbolical expressions of poetry, or to the dreams and fables of pagan mythology, to the wonders said to be performed by the lyre of Amphion and the harp of Orpheus—I might place before you the prophet of Jehovah composing his ruffled spirits by the soothing influence of music, that he might be suitably prepared to receive a message from the Lord of Hosts. I might present to your view the evil spirit, by which jealous and melancholy Saul was afflicted, flying, baffled and defeated, from the animating and harmonious tones of David's harp. I might show you the same David, the defender and avenger of his flock, the champion and bulwark of his country, the conqueror of Goliath, the greatest warrior and monarch of his age, laying down the sword and the sceptre to take up his harp, and exchanging the titles of victor and king for the more honorable title of the sweet Psalmist of Israel. . . . . But I appear not before you as her advocate; for in that character my exertions would be superfluous. She is present to speak for herself, and assert her own claims to our notice and approbation. You have heard her voice in the performances of this evening; and those of you, whom the God of nature has favored with a capacity of feeling and understanding her eloquent language, will, I trust, acknowledge that she has pleaded her own cause with triumphant success; has given sensible demonstration that she can speak, not only to the ear, but to the heart; and that she possesses irresistible power to soothe, delight, and fascinate the soul. Nor was it to the senses alone that she spake; but while, in harmonious sounds, she maintained her claims and asserted her powers, in a still and small, but convincing voice, she addressed herself directly to reason and conscience, proclaiming the most solemn and important truths—truths which perhaps some of you did not hear or regard, but which deserve and demand our most serious attention. . . . . With the same irresistible evidence as if an angel had spoken from heaven, she said, There is a God—and that God is good and benevolent. For, my friends, who but God could have tuned the human voice, and given harmony to sounds? Who, but a good and benevolent God, would have given us senses capable of perceiving and enjoying this harmony? Who, but such a being, would have opened a way through the ear for its passage to the soul? Could blind chance have produced these wonders of wisdom? or a malignant being these miracles of goodness? Could they have caused this admirable fitness between harmony of sounds and the organs of sense by which it is perceived? No. They would have either given us no senses, or left them imperfect, or rendered every sound discordant and harsh. With the utmost propriety, therefore, may Jehovah ask, Who hath made man's mouth, and planted the ear? Have not I, the Lord? With the utmost justice, also, may he demand of us that all our musical powers and faculties should be consecrated to his service, and employed in celebrating his praises. To urge you diligently and cheerfully to perform this pleasing, reasonable, and indispensable duty, is the principal object of the speaker. Not, then, as the advocate of music, but as the ambassador of that God whose being and benevolence music proclaims, do I now address this assembly, entreating every individual, without delay, to adopt and practice the resolution of the royal Psalmist—*I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*" Psalm 104 : 33.

He then carries his hearers back to the origin of the world, when "every thing was very good," and "all creation harmonized together. All its parts, animate and inanimate, like the voices and instruments of a well regulated concert, helped to compose a perfect and beautiful whole; and so exquisite was the harmony thus produced, that in the whole compass of creation not one jarring or discordant note was heard, even by the perfect ear of God himself. . . . . . The blessed angels of light began the universal chorus, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'" He describes "the music of the spheres"—the part which the heavenly bodies performed in the concert—and descends through the animate creation, down to the meanest thing that hath life:

"E'en the dumb fish that swam the flood,
"Leaped up, and meant the praise of God."

"Of this universal concert man was appointed the terrestrial leader, and was furnished with natural and moral powers, admirably fitted for this blessed and glorious employment. His body, exempt from dissolution, disease, and decay, was like a perfect and well-strung instrument, which never gave forth a false or uncertain sound, but always answered, with exact precision, the wishes of his nobler part, the soul. His heart did not then belie his tongue, when he sung the praises of his Creator; but all the emotions felt by the one were expressed by the other, from the high notes of ecstatic admiration, thankfulness, and joy, down to the deep tones of the most profound veneration and humility. In a word, his heart was the throne of celestial love and harmony, and his tongue at once the organ of their will and the sceptre of their power.

"We are told in ancient story, of a statue, formed with such wonderful art, that, whenever it was visited by the rays of the rising sun, it gave forth, in honor of that luminary, the most melodious and ravishing sounds. In like manner man was originally so constituted, by skill divine, that, whenever he contemplated the rays of wisdom, power, and goodness, emanating from the great Sun of the moral system, the ardent emotions of his soul spontaneously burst forth in the most pure and exalted strains of adoration and praise. Such was the world, such was man at the creation. Even in the eye of the Creator all was good; for, wherever he turned, he saw only his own image, and heard nothing but his own praises. Love beamed from every countenance; harmony reigned in every breast, and flowed mellifluous from every tongue; and the grand chorus of praise, begun by raptured seraphs round the throne, and heard from heaven to earth, was re-echoed back from earth to heaven; and this blissful sound, loud as the archangel's trump, and sweet as the melody of his golden harp, rapidly spread, and was received from world to world, and floated in gently-undulating waves, even to the farthest bounds of creation."

To this primeval harmony he exhibits the lamentable contrast which followed, when sin "untuned the tongues of angels, and changed their blissful songs of praise into the groans of wretchedness, the execrations of malignity, the blasphemies of impiety, and the ravings of despair. Storms and tempests, earthquakes and convulsions, fire from above and deluges from beneath, which destroyed the order of the natural world, proved that its baleful influence had reached our earth, and afforded a faint emblem of the jars and disorders which sin had introduced into the moral system. Man's corporeal part, that lyre of a thousand strings, tuned by the finger of God himself, destined to last as long as the soul, and to be her instrument in offering up eternal praise, was, at one blow, shattered, unstrung, and almost irreparably ruined. His soul, all whose powers and faculties, like the chords of an Æolian harp, once harmoniously vibrated to every breath of the divine Spirit, and ever returned a sympathizing sound to the tones of kindness and love from a fellow-being, now became silent, and insensible to melody, or produced only the jarring and discordant notes of envy, malice, hatred, and revenge. The mouth, filled with cursing and bitterness, was set against the heavens; the tongue was inflamed with the fire of hell. Every voice, instead of uniting in the song of 'Glory to God in the highest,' was now at variance with the voices around it, and, in barbarous and dissonant strains, sung praise to itself, or was employed in muttering sullen murmurs against the Most High—in venting slanders against fellow-creatures—in celebrating and deifying some worthless idol, or in singing the triumphs of intemperance, dissipation and excess. The noise of violence and cruelty was heard mingled with the boasting of the oppressor, and the cry of the oppressed, and the complaints of the wretched; while the shouts of embattled hosts, the crash of arms, the brazen clangor of trumpets, the shrieks of the wounded, the groans of the dying, and all the horrid din of war, together with the wailings of those whom it had rendered widows and orphans, overwhelmed and drowned every sound of benevolence, praise, and love. Such is the jargon which sin has introduced—such the discord which, from every quarter of our globe, has long ascended up into the ears of the Lord of hosts."

He next adverts to the mission of Jesus Christ, followed by the descent of the Holy Spirit, to restore harmony, when "those benevolent beings, who celebrated the birth-day of creation, joined with tenfold transports in singing glory to God in the highest, that there was again on earth peace and good-will to men, and that the vacancy which sin had occasioned among the choirs and armies of heaven would soon be filled by individuals selected from the human race, and taught to sing the song of the Lamb, by the influences of the Spirit of harmony himself. To teach mankind this sacred song, and thus prepare them to fill the places and perform the offices of those angels who kept not their first estate, is the great object of God in the preservation of the world, in its various revolutions, and in all the dispensations of his providence and grace; while to learn it, comprises our duty here, as to sing it will constitute our employment and happiness hereafter. This song, however, which St. John heard sung upon Mount Zion by the one hundred and forty and four thousand, can be taught by none but the Spirit of God."—He then urges the importance of piety in singers, especially such as lead in this part of worship, and enforces the duty of parents to cultivate musical talents in their children "Were this duty duly performed, from proper motives, we should soon see a sight which was perhaps never seen on earth—a whole assembly employed in singing praise to God. But, as this pleasing sight is probably reserved for the celestial world, let the leaders in this delightful part of religious worship remember, that if holiness becomes God's house for ever—if it is required that those who bear the vessels of the Lord should be holy—much more is it required of those who are the mouth of his people in singing his praise." In a solemn application he carries his hearers forward to the time when "every tongue in the assembly will be employed in praising or blaspheming—every individual be an angel or a demon."

There is a luxuriance in his style, at the time of writing this address, which was considerably chastened in later years. Taken as a whole, the performance, while it was in perfect unison with the occasion, was admirably adapted to promote the great object which was always uppermost in his mind, and may serve as a specimen of his talent for making every occasion speak with force to the consciences of men.

Bodily infirmity continued still to cramp and repress his energies, and he had already "been assured by his physician that his complaints were mortal."

"*April* 26. Was excessively weak, so that I could do nothing to any purpose. Longed to lay my feeble body in the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; not that I was weary of God's service, if I could serve him with more strength and sincerity; but my mind sunk under the weakness of my body."

"*Portland, May* 11, 1809.

—— "The Spirit seems still to accompany the word among us, and the attention to religion is rather increasing. Several new instances of conviction have occurred lately, which now bid fair to be abiding. * * *

"We have, this year, twenty tithingmen, instead of ten last year, and none the year before; and are in a fair way to have the town reformed, at least externally. Several of the most conspicuous leaders in the race of pleasure and fashion have lately become more serious, and we are hoping their example will be followed by others. The grand jury, also, begin to perform their duty, in shutting up tippling shops and bad houses. We are, therefore, encouraged to hope that God, by thus removing some of our external spots and pollutions, is preparing the way for an inward, real reformation. There seems, also, to be a hearing ear; our meetings on the Sabbath are unusually crowded, and the church seems to be unusually humbled under a sense of their deficiencies. The state of my health still continues a clog upon me; but it is a great mercy, and I cannot find it in my heart to pray for its removal."

"*June* 5, 1809.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"You judged right with respect to my anxiety to hear from home; for after the first of your letters, giving an account of my father's illness, arrived, I could scarcely rest till the arrival of the other; and had it not been for an approaching ordination, and some promising appearances among my people, I should, ere this, have been at home. I must confess that I am surprised, as well as grieved, that father should persist in preaching, when it is so clearly and indispensably his duty to desist; especially after the admonitions he has given me on that subject. He would see and allow, with respect to any other person in the same situation, that it was wrong to preach. Perhaps my language may appear almost disrespectful; but on this subject I am too nearly interested to use the cold language of strict propriety. I cannot be silent; and should the consequences which I fear, result from his preaching, it would ever be with me a subject of bitter regret that I had not done all in my power to prevent it. He must desist. It is a duty which he owes himself, his family, his people, and his God, to desist; for preaching now will be his death; and his family and people will repent too late, if they do not prevail upon him not to preach again until he is better. Mark my words—for I will have nothing to reproach myself with, be the consequences what they may. If I were at home, he should walk over my body before he could get into the pulpit. Excuse me, my dear mother, and plead with him to pardon my boldness; but I am distressed with the bare apprehension of what the consequence may be.

"*June* 7.

"My health continues to mend, though slowly. I get over the fatigue of preaching much sooner than I did, and my food and sleep nourish and refresh me, which has not been the case till lately. The religious attention appears rather to increase than diminish; but though it is pleasant to see inquirers, yet the constant anxiety which they occasion lest they should go back is exceedingly painful, and wears upon nature. I know it is wrong thus to take Christ's work out of his hands, and to perplex myself respecting events over which I have no control; but as yet I cannot wholly refrain, though the fault, like most other faults, carries its own punishment with it. I am at present, unless greatly deceived, in the worst part of the Christian race. My people love me, but I cannot enjoy their kindness, lest, instead of rendering me thankful, it should only feed pride. I can take no pleasure in any success that attends my labors, for similar reasons. I am surrounded with blessings more than I should have dared to hope for; but this accursed sin turns them all to poison and bitterness. Were it not for this, how happy might I be! But, blessed be God, this shows me more and more clearly what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord of hosts."

"*Portland*, *August* 1, 1809.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"My time is so much engrossed by parochial affairs, that, till this moment, I have had no leisure to write, and must now steal time from other things which require my attention. You can have no conception, unless you were present, how my time is taken up. Every moment is mortgaged before it arrives, and notwithstanding all my exertions, the business seems to grow upon my hands; so that I am ready to sit down in despair and do nothing. If every day was as long as ten, there would be ample employment for every hour. I find scarcely any time to read or study, and am constrained to go into the pulpit with discourses so undigested that my pride is continually mortified; and though it lies groaning and bleeding under continual wounds, it will not be persuaded to give up the ghost. However, so long as God is pleased to carry on his work with such discourses, I have no right to complain or be discouraged; since, the feebler the means, the more he is glorified. And I hope that, some time or other, I shall learn to be willing to be counted a fool, that all the glory may redound to his wisdom. But this is a hard lesson to learn. To be willing to be nothing, to rejoice to be nothing, that God may be all in all; to glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon us—this is the temper which I pine and hunger after; but, alas! it appears at a distance so great, that I despair of ever reaching any where near it in this world. If we could put God entirely in the place of self, consider his will as our will, his honor as our honor, his happiness as our happiness, his interest as our interest, and pursue it accordingly, how happy should we be! And how happy shall we be in that world where this will be the case, and where the very stump of that Dagon, self, will not be permitted to remain in our hearts, as the rival of our blessed Redeemer! O, to be holy as God is holy—this is to be happy, according to our measure, as God is happy. Strive then, my dear, dear sister, strive, wrestle, pray, long and pant after holiness. If I cannot be holy myself, yet I long to see others holy. If I cannot love and praise the ever-blessed Redeemer, it is almost heaven sufficient to see him loved and praised by others. If we could render to him according to his benefits!—but we cannot, we cannot; we must be content to be, as it were, crushed to all eternity under an insupportable weight of goodness; for even the disposition to praise him for favors already received, is a new favor, which still adds to the mighty debt; and the faster he enables us to render back what we receive, so much the faster do our obligations increase. And yet, instead of praising him, we are constantly sinning. I hope it is not so bad with others, but, with respect to myself there seems to be constant strife between him and me, whether I shall exceed in provoking, or he in pardoning; whether I shall succeed in destroying myself by my own madness and folly against his will, or he succeed in saving me in spite of myself. But in this strife he still conquers, and will conquer. I have done every thing to provoke him to leave me; but he will not be provoked. He will still return to humble me, and shame me; and I am ready to call on the rocks and mountains to fall on me, and hide me from the tender, expostulating, heart-breaking, soul-subduing glances of his eye, which fill me with such shame and confusion, that it seems as if I could more easily endure the lightnings of his indignation. Were all his people like me, and were justice done upon them, surely they would be sentenced to some hell more dreadful than that which is prepared for others.

"We have still considerable attention to religion The number of inquirers is upwards of forty, and many more are serious. We had hoped for hundreds ere this; but God keeps us waiting, and praying, and still gives a spirit of prayer."

"*Portland*, *Sept.* 22, 1809.

'My dearest Mother,

"The attention to religion still continues. Last communion we admitted eleven to the church, and next Sabbath we shall admit twelve more. The appetite for hearing seems insatiable, and our assemblies are more crowded than ever. Many have lately joined us. However, the Gospel proves a savor of death unto death as well as of life unto life. Many seem to be awfully hardened, and many severe reflections are cast upon religion and its professors.

"After telling you that religion thus flourishes among us, I am ashamed to complain; for what reason of complaint can a minister have, while he sees the cause of Christ triumphant? Nor do I complain of any thing except myself. Every earthly thing is imbittered to me, and the enjoyments of religion are kept far above my reach. I am overwhelmed by one wave of temptation after another. My bodily powers are kept in such a continual state of exhaustion, and my nerves are so weak, that mole-hills appear to be mountains, and I am ready to stumble at a straw; and when imaginary evils disappear, I find real perplexities and difficulties, which weigh me down in the dust. I know, indeed, that all these things are necessary; and when I am left in my own possession, I would not wish to have my burthen lightened. At times, too, I am 'holpen with a little help;' so that, though cast down, I am not utterly destroyed. But how desperate, how inconceivable must be the wickedness of that heart which draws down such sufferings from the hand of the compassionate Savior, and requires such painful remedies to heal it."

"*Portland, Nov.* 1, 1809.

"My dear Sister,

"It is no small disappointment to me, and I flatter myself that it will be some disappointment to you, that I am under the necessity of sending this inanimate scroll to see and inquire after you, instead of coming myself, as I expected, and partly promised. But my health does not absolutely require a journey this season; and my engagements are such, that I know not how to be absent a single day. In the first place, the situation of the congregation requires my presence. The people still have a hearing ear, but there is more opposition, more attempts to mislead young converts, and turn aside inquirers, than formerly; and therefore I wish to be with them. Besides, the neighboring ministers are stirred up to more diligence and attention. They have lately adopted the custom of keeping days of fasting and prayer, and inviting in a number of preachers; and I have some engagements of this kind just now, which I am unwilling to leave. We have already had three days of this kind in three of the neighboring towns, and hope to extend it through the whole association. We are just establishing a Bible Society also, and this employs considerable time at present; so that, with these and other things which require attention, I am too much engaged to leave home; and I trust you will not suspect my affection diminishes, because I, at this time, prefer duty to pleasure.

"My hopes respecting ———— increase. He tells his people some solemn truths; and a lawyer from ******, who was formerly acquainted with him, says he is spoilt, and that, though he used to be a good rational preacher, he is in a fair way to become an enthusiast. What a glorious instance of sovereign mercy it would be, should God bless that people with a faithful minister!

"The cause of evangelical religion is certainly gaining ground in this eastern country. Mr. J. of B. on whom the liberal party placed great reliance, has lately come out full on the side of orthodoxy. President A. was *thought* to be wavering, but he is now quite decided; and if Mr. ——— does not disappoint our hopes, I think the **** **** will lose all hopes of liberalizing the District of Maine. Violent and systematic attempts, however, are making here in opposition to truth. Pamphlets are circulated to prove that all the hard texts in the Bible refer to primitive times; and the new Socinian translation of the New Testament threatens to produce mischief; but, while the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord is lifting up a standard against him. Within two years five orthodox ministers have been settled, or are about settling in this association, which includes the county of Cumberland, and many others preach very different doctrine from what they formerly did."

His afflictive melancholy had now become comparatively harmless; for, though it did not cease to distress him, its tyrannical power was broken, and it much less frequently impeded his mental efforts. There is one allusion, however, to this mode of its operation, which is peculiarly characteristic:—"Was employed in vain attempts to prepare for lecture. Did nothing all day but learn the old lesson over again, that without Christ I can do nothing. Were I not the dullest of all scholars, I might surely spare my heavenly Father the trouble of teaching me this lesson again."

In his frequent seasons of illness, and his multiplied public engagements, he saw cause of danger that his private devotions would suffer interruption or abatement. To guard against such an evil appears to have been one object of the following resolutions, which were adopted, or renewed, near the close of this year:

"1. I will, on no pretence whatever, omit reading the Scriptures, with prayer, morning and evening.

"2. When practicable, I will spend one day in every week, in fasting and prayer.

"3. I will allow but six hours for sleep.

"4. I will endeavor to redeem the time, by being diligent and fervent in business.

"5. I will live more to the glory of God than I have done.

"6. I will, every evening, review my conduct through the day, and see how far I have fulfilled these resolutions."

To the peculiar trials which distinguished this year, the merciful Redeemer provided an antidote in the spiritual blessings which he bestowed. Under the labors of his servant, sinners were converted, and the church was increased by an addition of forty-four members.

CHAPTER XI.

Permanency and strength of maternal influence—Correspondence—Death-bed anguish, how alleviated—Disgraceful incident—Price of popularity—Reasons of former trials developed—Letters, &c.

The reader is not to infer that the subject of this narrative ceased to "give himself continually unto prayer," because the daily-recorded testimony of the fact, to which appeal has so often been made, is less fre quently introduced. This was an employment of which he seems never to have grown weary, and which there are no indications that he ever relaxed. He "dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and abode under the shadow of the Almighty." His accumulated burden of cares and sorrows he every day brought with him to the throne of grace, and retired thence relieved from its pressure, or strengthened to sustain it.

"*Dec.* 29. Was enabled to agonize in prayer for myself and people, and to make intercession with unutterable groanings. My heart and flesh cried out for the living God. Felt very strong hope that God was about to work wonders among us."

How well his mother understood his character—how sagacious she was in her aims at his heart, always successful in touching the chord that would be sure to vibrate—in a word, how assiduous and valuable a comforter she was—is apparent from his answers to her letters:

"*Portland, Feb.* 3, 1810.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I do 'bless Heaven' if I am made 'the joy of my parents' heart,' and esteem it one of the greatest mercies for which I have reason to be thankful. Just before I received the letter which contained this consoling assurance, I was wondering what such a poor, miserable, worthless wretch was ever made for, and why I should be preserved in existence. . . . . But, if I can afford any joy to my parents, or to any one else, I think I am willing to live, let my trials be ever so great; and I bless God, and thank you for sending me that letter just at the right time. It proved a very seasonable and refreshing cordial to a fainting spirit. But methinks I hear you ask—'Why do you talk of fainting, when you have so much reason to rejoice and praise God for his goodness?' I faint because I find no heart, in the midst of all his goodness, to praise him for it. I faint because, while I feed others, I am left to pine in hunger, and am parched with thirst. In proportion as my labors are blessed to others, my sorrows and sins increase; and, though I am assisted in keeping the vineyard of others, my own runs to waste. I cannot think that any one but a minister knows any thing of a minister's trials; and I believe Paul had a peculiar reference to them when he said—'If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable.'

* * * *

"The attention to religion continues among us, and has much increased within a few weeks. It seems to be spreading more among *the men.* There are some favorable appearances in the neighboring towns. Last week, and the week before, and this week, I have attended fasts, in different places, which have been observed with prayer for a revival of religion, and am engaged to attend another next week.

"I preached yesterday on our Savior's words to his disciples—'All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.' What an animating assurance to his people, when they have a strong faith to take hold of it!"

"*Feb.* 8. Was favored with great fervor and freedom at the throne of grace this morning. Longed only to be employed as an instrument of glorifying Christ, and was willing to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with his baptism, if I might have a double portion of his Spirit. In the afternoon and evening attended conferences, and was grievously disappointed to find no new inquirers."

"*April* 17, 1810.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"I have just received your affectionate letter, and thank you most sincerely for the maternal love which breathes in every line. God grant that I may be made worthy of all the proofs of parental affection with which I am mercifully favored. If I derive any pleasure from the success with which our gracious Master is pleased to crown my labors in the ministry, it, in a great measure, arises from the happiness which I know this success gives my friends at home. Next to glorifying God, by doing good to mankind, it is my chief desire to be made the means of promoting your happiness.

* * * *

"My situation is now as agreeable as I ever expect it will be on earth; and I shall not be in a hurry to change it. I now hear none but religious conversation; every day seems like a Sabbath, and we have a little image of heaven upon earth. You will, I know, join with me in blessing our bounteous Benefactor for this fresh instance of his goodness.

"I rejoice, most sincerely rejoice with you, and especially with my dear father, in the hopeful appearances which attend his labors. He has long been going forth weeping, bearing precious seed. I hope he will now be enabled to come again rejoicing, bringing with him the sheaves of an abundant harvest. I still feel exceedingly anxious respecting his health, but must leave it with God.

"My own health continues very much the same—rather better of late, if any different. I do not expect it will be restored till the attention to religion ceases; for it does not answer for me to have too many blessings at once.

"We are still favored with the presence of the Spirit of grace, though in a less degree than formerly. Appearances, however, begin again to look more encouraging. The young converts who have made a profession, with a very few exceptions, bid fair to do honor to the cause. Some of them, especially, advance very rapidly; and the mouths of opposers, who seek occasion to blaspheme, are stopped. The congregation, and especially the church, continue affectionate as ever. In short, I am a wonder to myself, and can scarcely believe what I daily see of the goodness of God. You will naturally conclude, however, that inward trials will not be wanting where outward comforts are so multiplied. I thought, long since, that I had endured every thing horrible and dreadful that was ever felt, heard of, or conceived; but I find that the depths of Satan, and of a heart desperately wicked, are not so easily fathomed. These unfathomable depths, however, only serve to show me more clearly the infinite heights and depths of Christ's love; and I know that he who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and the bear, will deliver me from every foe, however gigantic. It is but a moment, my mother, and we shall be singing the song of redeeming love together before the throne. Yes; our salvation is nearer than when we believed. Every moment it comes hastening on, and to-morrow it will be here. Yes; to-morrow we shall be as the angels of God. O for patience to wait for the glory which will be revealed, and to endure the previous light afflictions, which continue but for a moment!"

The affectionate minister has joys peculiar to himself, or rather, to his office; and the same may be said of his trials. He is the father of his flock so far as the relation supposes a community of feeling in their happiness and misery. Inconsiderate transgressors know little of the anguish which they bring upon the pastor who warns and entreats them to seek "the good and right way;" and they undervalue his counsels and his prayers, till roused by some affecting providence, or brought down to the very gate of death, and then there is nothing on earth which they so much covet. The case mentioned below is perhaps a marked one; and yet what faithful minister could not name instances which form no distant parallels to this.

"*May* 12. Was permitted to draw near to God with joy and confidence. O how astonishing is his goodness! A little while since I thought it impossible I should ever be delivered from the grasp of sin. But he has brought me up from the horrible pit and miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto his name. Had scarcely fallen asleep when I was called up to visit a dying woman. Found her in all the agonies of despair; and her dreadful shrieks pierced my very soul, and almost curdled my blood with horror. Prayed, in an agony of spirit, that God would snatch her as a brand from the burning. After prayer she was more quiet, and sunk into an imperfect sleep. Came away broken down with a load of anguish.

"*May* 13. Sabbath. Rose languid, and exhausted in body and mind. The shrieks of the dying woman rang in my ears incessantly. Between meetings was called to visit her again. Found her composed and happy, rejoicing in the Lord, and apparently resigned to live or die. On examination found reason to believe that she was really reconciled to God, and yet could hardly believe it. Could scarcely look upon it as an answer to prayer, and still knew not how to avoid considering it as such.

"*May* 17. Was much enlivened to-day by hearing that a remarkable spirit of prayer was poured out last evening at meeting. Could not but hope that the Lord was about to take the work into his own hands. In the evening attended the conference for inquirers. Was still more encouraged by hearing that the Spirit was again remarkably present at a prayer-meeting of the church this evening. Felt almost confident that the Lord was about to make bare his arm in a wonderful manner. Was so much animated and enlivened by this hope, that I could scarcely recover sufficient tranquillity of mind to pray that my hopes might not be disappointed.

"*May* 24. Was excessively feeble all day. In the afternoon and evening attended the conference for inquirers, but found only one. Was at first discouraged, but afterwards reflected that it is God's method to bring us low before he raises us."

"*Friday eve, June* 15.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"I arrived here this afternoon after an agreeable ride, and found a house of mourning waiting for me. The young lady I mentioned died last Wednesday morning. The grief of the family, and my own feelings, you can better conceive than I describe. The pious members, however, are wonderfully supported, so that they are an astonishment to themselves. The funeral is to be to-morrow, having been delayed one day for my return.

"Pray for me.—My friends at home are much endeared to me by their kindness during my late visit. I always feel vexed at myself, after coming away, that I did not say more on that subject, and seem more sensible of their goodness while I was with them. But, somehow or other, it is contrary to my nature to tell people how much I love and thank them."

"*July* 19, 1810.

—— "Grief has a wonderful efficacy, as you observe, in softening the heart; and suffering binds us to fellow-sufferers; so that I cannot tell what may be the event.

"I have much new cause for gratitude since I left home. The minister at ——, a smooth, liberal preacher, has been long intemperate, and lately fell from his horse into a slough, on his way to meeting. He was, on this, dismissed; and, as he was not the first bad minister this people had been cursed with, they have contracted a strong prejudice against the clergy. They, however, wrote to me to come and preach for them one Sabbath, if I could; and I accordingly went.

I was treated with great kindness, had a very crowded, attentive, and solemn assembly; and from letters since received in town, it appears that not a few were deeply affected and convinced of sin. They are exceedingly desirous that I should come again; and unless they succeed in getting a candidate soon, I shall go They are determined to have none come who are not orthodox. If I had health and strength, I might apparently do much good by thus preaching in different places."

The youthful reader, especially if he be a candidate for the ministry, will do well to pause over the following instructive paragraph:

"As you suspect, popularity costs me dear; and, did it not afford me the means of being more extensively useful, I should heartily pray to be delivered from it, as the greatest of all curses. Since the novelty has worn off, it affords me no pleasure; and yet I am continually wishing for more, though it feeds nothing but pride. If we had no pride, I believe applause would give us no pleasure. But no one can conceive how dearly it is purchased; what unspeakably dreadful temptations, buffetings, and workings of depravity are necessary to counteract the pernicious effects of this poison. It is, indeed, the first and last prayer which I wish my friends to offer up for me, that I may be kept humble; and if your too great and undeserved affection for me will exert itself in this way—that is, in praying for me—it may preserve your gourd from the blast and the worm.

"Mr. R. remains very much the same. His physicians give but faint hopes of his recovery. Why am not I cut down, and he spared? O, I am tired of receiving innumerable mercies without gratitude and of committing innumerable sins without suitable sorrow. . . . . That word *rest* grows exceedingly sweet to me. O, 'when shall I fly away, and be at rest?'

"The work still goes on. Dr. ———'s church have, in some measure, caught the flame, and compelled their ministers, reluctantly, I believe, to set up conferences. They have said so much against *evening meetings*, that it is hard now to set them up. But they are obliged to do it; and, to use the language of the world, the town is in danger of growing madder than ever."

Henceforward the reader will revert to the dark shades in the history of this beloved man with more complacency, and cease to look even upon his seasons of heart-rending spiritual anguish as worse than blank portions of existence. He suffered not for himself alone; the church of the Redeemer was indirectly, yet largely benefited by what he endured, and many of her members were, probably, prevented from making shipwreck of faith, and sinking into irrecoverable despondency, in consequence of having for a guide and counsellor one who had narrowly escaped a similar catastrophe. The amount of suffering which his own mental agony was thus the occasion of preventing, will not be known till the great day. But, long before he exchanged his armor for the victor's crown, he could appropriate the language of Paul—*I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church.*

"*Portland, Aug.* 8, 1810.

MY DEAREST SISTER,

"I have nothing interesting to write, and my spirits are so completely jaded and exhausted, that they will not bear the fatigue of invention. I cannot spiritualize, nor moralize, but must confine myself to dull narration; and, what is still worse, have nothing to narrate. I have, indeed, one piece of good news, though you have, probably, heard of it ere this. Mr. R. is better, and there are great hopes of his recovery. His complaints, I believe, are precisely similar to mine.

"We go on here pretty much as usual. Satan is extremely busy with Christians, and a large proportion of our church have been, and still are, exercised with the most dreadful and distressing temptations. I now understand the reason of my dreadful trials at Marlborough. Had it not been for them I should have been still more unfit for my present situation than I am at present. Often should I be utterly at a loss what to say or think, had not a wise and gracious Master foreseen what I should need, and taken measures accordingly.

"He has been pleased, of late, to bless my endeavors to comfort his tempted and distressed people with wonderful success. I often stand astonished at it myself, and seem to look upon it as a greater honor and favor than even to be owned in the conversion of sinners. If I can be permitted to do this, I seem willing to stay and suffer every thing which he sees fit to lay upon me. But I tremble at what may be the consequence. Those who find my endeavors blessed to comfort them, of course, grow more and more affectionate; and I fear lest they prove guilty of creature-idolatry, and thus provoke God to wither their gourd. I have warned them of the danger of this in private, and have, at last, openly preached against it; but God does not seem to bless it to their conviction, and I fear we shall both smart for it. He is a jealous God, and if his people put a servant in his place, wo be to the poor creature who is thus set up against him. Pray for me, therefore, and pray for my people. When I ask them to pray for me, they only smile, and reply, that I need not *their* prayers. In short, we are all young here, and have little experience; and if God does not prevent, we shall rush into all manner of extravagance.

"Since I wrote last I have been to preach at a place near this, where they have been stupid almost to a proverb. But I hear now that prayer-meetings are established; the minister is roused; and many are earnestly inquiring what they shall do.

"Another minister, who lives about —— miles from this, has lately rode into town, week after week, to attend our lectures. He told his people, that, though he had to hire a horse, yet he was always amply repaid. He has been very lax, but a great alteration has taken place in his preaching and conduct, and there is considerable attention excited among his people.

"After all this, you will not wonder to hear that I am borne down with heavy burdens; pressed out of strength above measure, so as, at times, to despair even of life. All this is necessary, absolutely necessary, and I desire to consider it as a mercy; but it is hard, very hard to bear. If any one asks to be made a successful minister, he knows not what he asks; and it becomes him to consider whether he can drink deeply of Christ's bitter cup, and be baptized with his baptism. If we could learn, indeed, to give all the glory to God, and keep only the sin and imperfections to ourselves, we might be spared these trials. And one would think this easy enough. One would think, that Jonah could hardly be proud of his success among the Ninevites; and we have, if possible, less reason to be proud than he. But pride will live and thrive without reason, and in despite of every reason to the contrary."

"*Portland, Sept.* 20, 1810.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I thank you most sincerely for your letter, which I have just received; but I do not thank you at all for the reason which you assign for not writing more frequently. It seems, forsooth, that I am so wonderfully wise and good that you dare not write me. My dear sister, this is little better than downright mockery—not that I suspect you of a design to mock me, but your commendations, however sincere, are cutting, and I beg of you to wound me no more with them. Go and congratulate a wretch on the rack upon the happiness which he enjoys; tell a beggar of his riches, an illiterate peasant of his learning, or a deformed cripple of his strength and beauty; but mock not a vile, stupid sinner, ready to sink under an almost insupportable weight of guilt and iniquity, with commendations of his goodness, or a blind, ignorant creature with compliments upon his wisdom and knowledge. You are ready, perhaps, to look upon my situation as enviable; but if you knew what I suffer in a single day, you would fall down on your knees and bless God that you are not a minister. Not that I consider it as a small favor to be placed in this sacred office, and honored with some degree of acceptance and success. I know it is a post which an angel might envy, and I can never, to all eternity, praise God sufficiently for putting me into it, and supporting me under the pressure of its duties. I would not part with the privilege of preaching Christ crucified to perishing sinners, and of administering to the consolation of God's afflicted people, to be made monarch of the world. But O the agonies, the unutterable, the inconceivable agonies which must be endured by those who attempt, with such a heart as mine, to perform this work! I shudder with horror to think of the scenes through which I have been obliged to pass, and shrink back from those through which I must yet pass before I reach the rest prepared for the people of God. It is, however, some comfort, that the time when I shall quit this scene of trial cannot be far distant. Nature cannot long hold out under what I endure; and I trust that, ere many years, I shall be safe in the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. If, meanwhile, I may be preserved from insanity, and from wounding the cause of Christ by falling into open wickedness, it is perhaps more than I have any reason to expect. It is a dreadful thought, that no Christian on earth, however holy, humble, and watchful he may at present be, has any security against falling into open sin before he dies. As to resolving that he will not thus fall, it avails nothing. As well might a stone resolve not to fall when the power which upheld it is removed. You will perhaps say, We may hope that God will uphold us for the sake of his cause. So David might have hoped. It seemed very important that he should be preserved—and yet how he fell! And what reason, then, have I to hope that I shall not fall? And if I should, it would injure the cause of religion infinitely more than all my labors will ever advance it."

The following letter is without date, but cannot be materially out of its place:

"My health remains much the same. I have enjoyed more in religion since my last journey to Rindge than during my whole ministry before. My distressing exercises have vanished—I sometimes hope, never to return; and my thoughts are so unusually drawn upward, that I cannot avoid concluding that my stay on earth is to be but short. My church are, many of them, of the same opinion. They tell me they are certain that I shall not continue with them long. Sometimes I am tempted to wish that my expectations may soon be realized. At others, I wish to stay a little longer, and tell sinners what a precious Savior Jesus is. But the Lord's will be done. Welcome life, welcome death, welcome any thing from his hand. The world—O what a bubble—what a trifle it is! Friends are nothing, fame is nothing, health is nothing, life is nothing; Jesus, Jesus is ALL! O what will it be to spend an eternity in seeing and praising Jesus! to see him as he is, to be satisfied with his likeness! O, I long, I pant, I faint with desire to be singing, Worthy is the Lamb—to be extolling the riches of sovereign grace—to be casting the crown at the feet of Christ! And why may we not do all this on earth? My dearest sister, we may do it, if it is not our own fault. Pause a moment, and try to conceive how they feel, and what they are this moment doing in heaven. Pause and reflect till you hear their songs, and feel your heart glow with their love. Then shout aloud, 'Worthy is the Lamb; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed me by thy blood. Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive glory, and blessing, and honor and power!' But I must desist.

"Remember me most affectionately to our dear parents; and I hope that they and you are willing that I should go to heaven first."

"*Portland, Dec.* 10, 1810.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"Since my return it has pleased my adorable Savior, in his sovereign mercy, to give me clearer and more transporting views of himself than I have ever before enjoyed; and I have no leisure or thoughts to bestow on any thing else. He has brought me up out of the horrible pit, where I have so long been sinking, and put a new song in my mouth; and O that all creation would join with me in singing his praises! I have sometimes heard of spells and charms to excite love, and have wished for them, when a boy, that I might cause others to love me. But how much more do I now wish for some charm which should lead men to love the Savior! What would I not give for the power to make sinners love him—for the faculty of describing his beauties and glories in such a manner as to excite warmer affections towards him in the hearts of Christians! Could I paint a true likeness of him, methinks I should rejoice to hold it up to the view and admiration of all creation, and be hid behind it for ever. It would be heaven enough to hear him praised and adored, though no one should know or care about insignificant me. But I cannot paint him;

I cannot describe him; I cannot make others love him nay, I cannot love him a thousandth part so much as I ought myself. I faint, I sink under the weight of infinite, insupportable obligations. O for an angel's tongue!—O for the tongues of ten thousand angels to sound his praises! I would fain do something for him, but I can do nothing. I cannot even attempt to do any thing without his grace; and the more I am enabled to do in his service, so much the more is the load of obligation increased. O that God, who alone is able, would glorify his Son! This, at present, is all my salvation, and all my desire, that Christ may be glorified. For this reason I long and pray for a revival. I long that the blessed Jesus should receive some more suitable returns for his wondrous love to our ruined race. We are hoping that this will be the case here I hope the church begin to awake and pray more earnestly than ever, and that we shall yet see hundreds here praising the ever-blessed Redeemer. It seems of no consequence what becomes of me. It seems of no consequence what becomes of sinners, comparatively speaking. But O, it is of infinite consequence that Christ should be glorified. My dearest mother, do strive to love him more than ever. Do strive to make others love him. O, if it was not for a hope of doing something for his glory, how could we be content to live a single hour absent from his presence above!

"I shall not wonder if you think me mad. I *hav been* mad, and am just beginning to see my madness O how little zeal, how little love have I manifested How madly have I misimproved my time and talents how wretchedly neglected the all-important work t which I am called! how ungratefully requited the best of Saviors! How often have I called his love and faithfulness in question, at the very time he was taking the best possible measures to promote my happiness! Now he returns to humble me, and shame me for my folly and ingratitude. O, I know not how to bear this astonishing, overwhelming goodness! Methinks I could bear his anger—but his love cuts me to the heart. O that I may be dumb, and not open my mouth any more, since he is pacified towards me for all that I have done! O that, for the remainder of life, I could hear of nothing, think of nothing, speak of nothing but the wonders of his person, his character, and redeeming love! But, unless he prevents it, I shall wander again, and act over, not only once, but often, all my past sins. It seems now infinitely better to die, than to be guilty of this; but he knows, and will do what is best."

"*Dec.* 16. Sabbath. This day completes three years since my ordination. What a miserable, unprofitable servant have I been! In the afternoon preached with much difficulty, from Ezekiel, 33 : 7–9. Was much affected, and my hearers appeared scarcely less so. Came home excessively fatigued, but rejoicing in God."

This year forty-two souls were gathered into the church.

CHAPTER XII.

Holy aspirations—Gratitude to the Savior—Multiplied labors—Novel family scene—Danger averted—"Curious frame"—Flattery deprecated—His marriage—Becomes sole pastor of the church—Retrospect of the year.

"*Dec.* 17, 1810. I now commence the fourth year of my ministry. Whether I shall live to finish it God only knows. O that it may be spent to better purpose than those which are passed!

"*Dec.* 29. Felt the blessed effects of casting all my cares upon Him who careth for me. In family prayer was most unusually drawn out towards God, and felt as much like an inhabitant of heaven as I ever expect to feel here. All earthly objects were swallowed up; self appeared to be nothing, and God to be all in all. Felt as if my time on earth would be short. I was in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, and yet wishing to stay, that I might tell others what a precious Savior he is. But the Lord's will be done. Welcome any thing which he pleases to send.

"*Dec.* 31. Spent the day in visiting. In the evening met a number of Christian friends, and had a sweet season in conversing upon heaven. Our hearts seemed to burn within us, and it was a little foretaste of heaven!"

These quotations furnish pretty fair specimens of his religious feelings for several months. excepting those intervals when he was greatly reduced and disheartened by sickness. On emerging from the darkness of such a season, he writes:

"*Jan.* 10, 1811. This morning God was pleased to return and lift me out of the dust. The great comforts with which I was favored some time since, rendered me proud and I needed a season of darkness to humble me. Had much freedom and some brokenness of heart this morning in secret and family prayer, and some ability to plead with God not to forsake us. O how sovereign and free is his grace!"

Under the same date he writes to his mother:

"Last Sabbath was communion with us. I preached from Zech. 3 : 2—*Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* What a just and striking description of every redeemed sinner! and what a glorious idea does it afford us of the work of redemption! To snatch a smoking brand from eternal burnings, and plant it among the stars in the firmament of heaven, there to shine like the sun for ever—O what a glorious work is this! a work worthy of God! a work which none but God could perform. Such a brand am I—a brand yet smoking with the half-extinguished fires of sin; a brand scorched and blackened by the flames of hell. What then do I owe to Him who entered the furnace of divine wrath that he might bring me out! who spread himself over me as a shield from that fiery storm which would have set me forth an example, like Sodom, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

"I have no heart to speak or write about any thing but Jesus; and yet I have little patience to write about him in our miserably defective language. O for a language suitable to speak his praises, and describe his glory and beauty ! But they cannot be described—they cannot be conceived; for 'no man knoweth the Son but the Father.' What a wonderful idea does that text give us of the Son ! Saints in heaven do not know him perfectly ; even the angels do not. None but the Father is able to comprehend all his excellence. Yet various, great, unsearchable, infinite, as are all his excellences, they are all ours ; *our* Savior, *our* Head, 'our flesh and our bone.' O, wonder !—how passing wonder is this ! Methinks, if I could borrow, for a moment, the archangel's trump, and make heaven, earth and hell resound with 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain !' I could contentedly drop into nothing. But no—I should wish to live, and make them resound with his name through eternity. What a transporting thought—to spend an eternity in exalting God and the Lamb ; in beholding their glory, and hearing them extolled by all creatures !—this is heaven indeed. To be swallowed up and lost in God ; to have our spirits embraced, wrapped up in his all-infolding Spirit ; to forget ourselves, and think only of him ; to lose, in a manner, our own separate existence, and exist only in him ; to have his glory all in all to us ; this is, indeed, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

About a month later, he gives this account of their spiritual prospects :—"Our hopes of increasing attention begin to revive again. Some recent instances of conviction have taken place, and we have about thirty very serious inquirers. The church, too, are more roused, and we have as yet had no scandals among us for the world to take hold of. I cannot but hope that God designs to raise up a church here which will shine bright, and be like a city set on a hill. Satan buffets them sorely; but the more he buffets them, the faster they grow. I hope yet, if God pleases, to see ——— seated with us at the communion-table. It would, I doubt not, rejoice your very heart."

Some idea of the variety and amount of his labors may be collected from a single sentence, which is incidentally introduced into a letter dated February 17: 'I preach, or do what is, at least, as laborious, six nights in a week, besides talking incessantly a considerable part of every day." It is not improbable that to his private intercourse, not less than his public addresses, the rapid prosperity of religion is to be ascribed. His inventive genius seemed to delight in finding out as many ways as possible by which a religious influence might be brought to bear upon those to whom he had access. Take the following domestic scene as an illustration: it is unquestionably the offspring of his own pious ingenuity; for it bears as infallible marks of its parentage as the description of it does of his pen:

——"I will give you a little sketch of our family way of living, that you may adopt it if you please. In the first place, we have agreed, that, if either of us says a word which tends in the least to the discredit of any person, the rest shall admonish the offender; and this has entirely banished evil-speaking from among us. In the next place we are careful, especially in the early part of the day, as at breakfast, to converse on nothing which is inconsistent with maintaining a prayerful frame. Christians, I believe, generally think they do pretty well if they pray twice a day; but I see not why we are not just as much commanded to pray without ceasing, as to pray at all. We sometimes, however, allow our minds a little relaxation at dinner, by conversing on other subjects than those which are strictly religious. At the beginning of evening, before the candles are brought in, if I am at home, which is not very often the case, we all sit down, and take a little tour up to heaven, and see what they are doing there. We try to figure to ourselves how they feel, and how we shall feel, and what we shall do; and often, while we are trying to imagine how they feel, our own feelings become more heavenly; and sometimes God is pleased to open to us a door in heaven, so that we get a glimpse of what is transacting there—and this fills us so full of impatience, that we can scarcely wait till death comes to carry us home. If we cannot get together before tea for this purpose, we take a little time after prayers, before separating for the night; and I assure you it forms an excellent preparative for sweet sleep But enough of this at present; if you like it, I will tell you more by and by."

"*Feb.* 1811.

——"We have been in great danger from fire. It was truly of the Lord's mercies, that we were not consumed, with a considerable part of the town. Just as the water began to fail, and all hopes were over, the fire abated. I was so much fatigued by over exertion in removing our things, that I was miserably unwell for a fortnight, but am now recovered. Some acknowledge the goodness of God in sparing the town; but others are dreadfully hardened. One poor creature, as soon as the fire was extinguished, cried out, 'Well, we have got it out, but no thanks to Payson, nor God neither.' Another, after meeting, the ensuing Sabbath, observed, that he 'did not like this giving all the glory to God; but that man ought to have at least some part of the glory of putting out the fire.' This is, indeed, the natural language of every heart, but few like to express it so openly.

"I fear that religion is on the decline among us There is still, however, considerable attention, and we have had a few remarkable instances of conversion."

"*March* 1. Had a most violent headache, and was almost distracted; yet was obliged to preach in the evening. Found many more present than I expected, and was unusually assisted, and the people were very solemn. Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me; for when I am weak, then am I strong."

"*Portland, March* 25, 1811.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

——"Satan rages most violently against Christ's sheep, and I am almost constantly employed in trying to counsel and comfort them under their manifold temptations. However, the more he rages, the faster they grow; though I have had serious fears respecting some of them, that they would lose life, or reason, or both I now find why my gracious Master has suffered me to be so grievously tormented in times past. How miserably qualified should I otherwise have been to speak a word in season to them that are weary!—Still I, I, I! nothing but I's—seven in half a page

Well, I don't care—I am writing to my *mother*, and I know she loves to hear about *I;* so I will proceed, and tell her about a half-sleeping, half-waking dream I had the other morning. If it does her as much good as it did me, it won't be paper lost.

"After a curious kind of frame in sleep, I waked myself up with exclaiming—'Lord, why is it that thou art never weary of heaping favors on ungrateful, perverse, stubborn wretches, who render thee only evil for good?' In a moment he seemed to reply as powerfully as if he had spoken with an audible voice—'Because I am never weary of gratifying my dear Son, and showing the greatness of my love to him. Till I am weary of him, and cease to love him, I shall never be weary of heaping favors on his friends, however unworthy.'—These words, it is true, contain nothing more than an obvious truth; but they conveyed more to my mind than all the books I ever read. If you meditate upon them, perhaps they may convey something to yours. What strong confidence are they suited to inspire, if we realize their full import! How will they encourage us to ask and expect great things, notwithstanding our inexpressible unworthiness! Never before did the scheme of redemption, and the great mystery of God manifest in the flesh, appear *so* great and glorious. While meditating upon it, I was wonderfully struck with a reason which never occurred to me before, why God permitted Adam to fall. Had he stood, all his posterity would have been happy. He would, therefore, in one sense, have been their Savior; and while they were enjoying the happiness of heaven, they would have exclaimed, 'For all this we are indebted to our first parent.' This would have been too great an honor for any finite being. It would have tempted Adam to pride, and us to idolatry. The honor, therefore, was reserved for God's own Son, the second Adam. But perhaps this has occurred to you before; so I will not enlarge.

"Mr. R. is still in miserable health. He will take a journey in the spring. If that does not help him, we shall think him irrecoverable. I fear he is too good to stay long on earth.

* * * *

"You must not, certainly, my dear mother, say one word which even looks like an intimation that you think me advancing in grace. I cannot bear it. Every body here, whether friends or enemies, are conspiring to ruin me. Satan and my own heart, of course, will lend a hand; and if *you* join too, I fear all the cold water which Christ can throw upon my pride will not prevent it from breaking out into a destructive flame. As certainly as any body flatters and caresses me, my Father has to whip me for it; and an unspeakable mercy it is that he condescends to do it. I can, it is true, easily muster a hundred good reasons why I should not be proud; but pride won't mind reason, nor any thing else but a good drubbing. Even at this moment I feel it tingling in my fingers' ends, and seeking to guide my pen."

"*April* 4. Spent the forenoon in writing. In the afternoon attended the inquiry meeting, and was refreshed by seeing a number of new inquirers. The Spirit of God seemed to be present. In the evening attended another, and found one who had obtained comfort. Came home exceedingly fatigued, but rejoicing in God.

"*April* 5. Had some sense of my own weakness, and some longing desires that God would meet with us. Had a most solemn, joyful, and refreshing season, and trust it was highly profitable to the church, but was myself exceedingly overcome.

"*April* 6. Was exceedingly happy all day. Enjoyed the peace of God, which passeth understanding.

"*April* 8. Miserably weak, both in body and mind, and exceedingly wretched most of the day. The light of my soul was withdrawn from me. O what a miserable wretch am I when Christ is absent! It is, however, necessary that he should sometimes withdraw; and I was enabled to realize that it was love which induced him to hide his face, and I submitted to it without one murmuring thought."

On the eighth of May Mr. Payson was married to Ann Louisa Shipman, of New Haven, Connecticut, a woman of kindred piety, and whose energy and firmness of character, connected with other estimable accomplishments, proved his best earthly support, and an abiding check upon his constitutional tendency to depression. Female affection and ingenuity could not have been better directed, or more signally honored and rewarded. In the acquisition of such a "help meet," he justly considered himself as "having obtained favor of the Lord."

The fact that the peace and welfare of so many, as well as his own usefulness, are materially affected by the character of a pastor's wife, deserves the consideration of all who are still in a situation to profit by it. A chapter might be compiled from Mr. Payson's letters, which would be of great use to the clerical candidate for wedlock, who was anxious to know the best method of conducting the preliminary intercourse: but the favored object of his conjugal attachment still survives, and her right to the early avowals and precious testimonials of his faithful love is sole and exclusive. Still, an instructive exhibition of his views and of his practice may be made, without any indelicate infringement of this right.

He wholly avoided those "entangling alliances," in early youth, which have doomed many a man either to take to his bosom one whom, though once his equal, he had so far outstripped in the career of mental improvement as to produce a most mortifying disparity, and preclude the hope of ever finding in his wife a companion fitted for rational intercourse; or else to desert the confiding female whose affections he had gained—an alternative too base for an honorable-minded man to adopt. Mr. Payson's circumspection is the more remarkable, when his ardent temperament is considered; and yet, as early as 1805, the following sober views are expressed in a letter to his sister:

"When I was at home I thought you appeared rather apprehensive that I should form some connection, which, to say the least, would be no help to my religious pursuits. But you may lay aside this fear. I have seen so much of my own proneness to turn aside, that it is, and I hope ever will be my resolution, not to fetter myself with any voluntary inducements to stray. Besides, I think no precept in the Bible is plainer than that which forbids us to yoke together with unbelievers. However, I think it probable enough that this resolution may be the occasion of my continuing unmarried; but I am not at all anxious about it."

About the time of his forming an acquaintance with Mrs. P. he thus wrote to his mother, whom, like a dutiful son, he had previously consulted:

"*Exeter, Wednesday evening.*

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"As I know the deep interest you take in every thing which concerns your son, I will go no farther before I inform you of the result of the business on which we conversed while I was at home. I cannot, indeed, go into particulars; but it may be some gratification to you to know, that the business is concluded on, and nothing remains but fix the wedding day. On this point alone we differed. * * *

"And now, my dearest mother, you must permit me to exult over you a little. When I used to talk of getting a wife without losing any time about it, you laughed at the idea, and thought it preposterous, impracticable, and absurd. But you see, that, without going a mile purposely out of my way, or losing a single hour, I have found, or rather Providence has found for me, a person who bids fairer to render me happy than any other woman I have seen. It is true, many things may yet intervene to prevent the contemplated connection; but, humanly speaking, it will take place. And if it does not, I trust that I shall be resigned, and feel satisfied that it is for the best. * * * At present, God seems to have made my way prosperous; and I am more than ever persuaded that the best way to succeed in any of our temporal concerns is to cast them upon him—have nothing to do with them—and devote ourselves entirely to the a vancement of his cause. True, he only can excite us to adopt this course; but when he does, it is an almost infallible symptom of success."

His mother must have held a pen of rare and various powers—as piquant in satire as it was judicious in counsel and soothing in consolation. She might have thought him affectedly singular in his notions of matrimony, and directed her strokes accordingly. At any rate, he is seen smarting under her castigation, in the following letter, which, by the way, is a very serious one, and discloses a heart alive to the danger of being diverted, by creature attachments, from the Lord of his affections:

—— "I am sorry you are never pleased with me when I write on a certain subject. I fear this letter will appear as little pleasing as any of its predecessors. Since I wrote last, I have made another visit to A——. Circumstances, which I could not foresee, rendered it indispensably necessary. I took care not to be absent either on a Sabbath or lecture day; yet I felt very guilty in appropriating so much of my Master's time to my own use. A voice seemed continually sounding in my ears—'What dost thou here, Elijah?' Had it not been for this, I verily believe Louisa and I should have taken a trip to Rindge. * * * But the idea of forming new ties to bind myself to the world, is dreadful. I thought, at the time, that I sincerely sought divine direction; but I have since been afraid that I did not. However, I know that the Lord reigns, and that he will take care of his glory; and this is enough for me. As to my happiness here, it is nothing. I neither expect any happiness, nor wish for any, separate from that which arises from serving and enjoying God. It is but a day, an hour, a moment, and all will be over.

—— "But, my dearest mother, how could you write as you did respecting the views and feelings which my letter expressed? It was cruel to banter me so; at least, if any other person, of as long standing in religion as you, had written in such a manner, I should have been sure she was bantering me, and ridiculing my weakness. I shall be afraid to express my feelings again; and, indeed, I did not intend to do it then, but they ran away with me before I was aware. You talk of my heights and depths—Yes, I am deep, indeed, in guilt, and my iniquities are high as the heavens. These are all the heights and depths of which I know any thing. Compared with old Christians, I am but a babe of yesterday; and joys, which to them would appear things of course, are sufficient to make my weak head run round. It was for this reason I thought my letter must appear a foolish rhapsody. But I will not say another word on the subject, lest you should suppose I am aping humility."

The considerations by which he defended himself against the fear of possible disappointment, which some communication of his cautious parent was adapted to excite, are striking and full of interest. To estimate aright his indifference as to the developments of the future, it should be remembered that the negotiation had already proceeded too far to render an honorable retreat optional with him. The pledge "for better or for worse" had been virtually interchanged; and the result, whether fruition or disappointment, he was determined should subserve his spiritual welfare:

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

—— "I am very sorry you think me so heterodox in my notions respecting matrimony; but I cannot alter them. * * * Have I not the best possible security that all things shall work together for my good? I shall *certainly* have a good wife, and be very happy with her, if God sees best; but if he sees a bad wife is a necessary trial for me, who am I, that I should object? I should certainly feel very easy about my present welfare, did it depend entirely on your good wishes to render me happy. How much more reason, then, have I to be easy, since it depends on my Father and Savior! If I wanted just such a world as this for my own private accommodation, methinks I could go and ask it of my Savior, just as freely as I would ask him for a straw. He who refused not his own blood, surely would not refuse me such a trifle as a world, which he could make with a word, if he saw that it was really necessary to my happiness. Why, then, should I feel the least possible anxiety about a wife? or waste my Master's time in seeking one?"

A few short extracts will be sufficient to show the nature and manner of his intercourse with the friend to whom he was affianced:

——— "After all, we shall be just as much to each other as our Maker pleases. He can, and I trust will, render us as happy as it is best we should be in this life, and make us a blessing to each other. With his permission, I purpose to observe Friday, Dec. 7th, as a day of prayer for his blessing upon our union, should he permit it to take place. I trust your prayers will ascend with mine.

* * * *

"I was delighted with what you wrote respecting our precious and adorable Savior. You cannot find a quicker and surer way to my heart, than by praising and loving him. * * * He is worthy, he is precious indeed. To the power, the majesty, the glory of God, he unites the gentleness, the tenderness, the sympathy of a friend and brother. This is just such a Savior as we need.

* * * *

"I arrived last evening much fatigued. My journey, though quickly performed, was not unattended with danger. Owing to the weakness of the harness or the carelessness of the driver, the horses ran away with us no less than three times, and were stopped only for want of power to proceed. For some minutes we expected every instant to be dashed in pieces, and my fellow-passengers were not a little frightened; but I knew that my heavenly Father held the reins, and felt unusually happy.

—— "It is a sufficient answer to your admonitions respecting my health, to say that it has rather improved than otherwise the year past; and shall I, then, distrust the power and goodness of God, and endeavor, by diminishing my labors, to lay up a stock of health for a future period, which, after all, I may never live to see?

* * * *

"I have suffered every conceivable kind of spiritual distress myself, and have seen too much of the good effects of it to be much grieved when I see others suffering the same. I know that Christ is with them in the furnace, and will bring them forth as gold; and therefore, though I sympathize with them, I am rather pleased than sorry to see them distressed. . . . . I have long considered a growing acquaintance with the desperate wickedness and surpassing deceitfulness of the heart as almost the only mark of a real Christian which Satan cannot counterfeit."

From a union formed on such principles, the happiest results were to be expected. That gracious Being whose blessing they had supplicated, more than answered their requests. On taking possession of the habitation prepared for their reception, they entered on their new condition as a separate family, with special acknowledgments of God. "In the evening," says the diary, "had a meeting by way of dedicating our house. It was a very solemn, melting season. Afterwards, was greatly favored in secret prayer. Knew not how to give over praying, the employment was so sweet. Could scarcely ask any thing for myself, but only that God might be glorified."—He lost no time in making his mother a partaker of his joy.

"My dearest Mother,

"I must tell you how happy I am; happy, not because I have one of the best of wives; not because I live in the midst of a grateful and affectionate people; not because I am surrounded by an abundance of the good things of this life; but because I enjoy God in all these things.

"We went to house-keeping yesterday. I felt in some measure as I wished to feel on such an occasion. It was a blessed evening, and this has been a blessed morning. My dearest mother, I must let my heart have vent. All my days *I* have grieved, provoked, and dishonored God, and he has done nothing but heap favors, and pardons, and honors upon me. O it affects me to think of his goodness! O that all the world knew how vile I have been, and how good he has been in return. Could Christians know his dealings with such a wretch, they would surely never, never distrust him again. And yet I, who do know it, shall distrust him again. I shall again grieve and provoke him, as in times past, and perhaps be left to bring a reproach upon religion. I never felt myself to be so much in danger as at this moment. I am happy in my own soul—happy in my external circumstances; but I rejoice with trembling. I dare not resolve that I will not suffer myself to be led away or lifted up. I dare not say, that, by to-morrow, I shall not feel stupid and ungrateful as a block; or even full of rage and enmity as a devil. But I never felt more able to hang upon Christ and trust him to keep me up. He knows, I trust, it is my earnest desire to be stripped of all my blessings, and left utterly destitute, rather than be drawn by them away from him.

"My people have been wonderfully kind. As soon as we got into our house, they sent us two cart-loads of provisions, &c. &c. including every article, however trifling, which could be wanted in a family. This was kind in them, but still more kind in my heavenly Father. O may I never forget, that, whoever may be the stream, He is the Fountain.

"And now, my dearest mother, what more shall I say? You have nothing to wish for, nothing to pray for, as it respects your happy son, but that he may not be rendered slothful, or vain, or proud, by prosperity, that his love and zeal for his divine Master may increase with his mercies, and that he may be prepared for a day of adversity; for such a day must come. Well, let it come, if God so pleases. Welcome any thing that he sees fit to send.

"Notwithstanding your fears, I do not yet love my parents one whit less than before. It almost doubles my happiness to think of their sharing it."

On his birth-day next following this event, he writes:—"The past year has been one of the most important of my life. I have seen much, very much of the goodness of God, and of my own vileness. I have formed a connection which will have an influence lasting as eternity, and I have reason to hope that the divine blessing has attended it."

Two letters will here be introduced, whose dates would assign them a later place, but which are connected with the paragraphs just quoted, by the domestic nature of their contents. The second is from his mother, congratulating him upon the birth of his first-born, and must supply the place of his own reflections on that event; for at that time his diary is silent, and the letter which bore the tidings to his parents has not been preserved.

"*Portland*, *Jan.* 20, 1812.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,

"Were you with us to-day you would see a strange mixture of joy and grief among us. Your letter to Grata, especially that part of it which relates to my brothers, gave us as much joy as we can ever expect to feel in one day, while inhabitants of this changing world. It made our hearts leap within us to hear of poor Eben, or rather rich Eben, as I hope we may now call him. But—there must always be a *but*, till we get to heaven—the same mail that brought this welcome intelligence brought a letter from New Haven, informing us of the death of Louisa's brother Henry. She is, of course, in great affliction, for she had little if any evidence that he was prepared for this event. I begin now to find, for the first time, that by doubling myself I have doubled my sorrows, and rendered myself a broader mark for the arrows of misfortune. However, I am content to meet with a few deductions from the happiness which wedlock affords. I should otherwise be almost too happy for my spiritual welfare. I am fully of your opinion, that marriage is a wonderfully wise and gracious institution, and shows, in a striking point of light, the goodness of our heavenly Father. I am also convinced, that, when properly managed, it is no less favorable to religion. You will think that I write like a new-married man; and will, probably enough, conclude, that, in a few years, I shall feel differently. It is very possible that I may; but hitherto my happiness has been continually increasing. We are much more attached to each other than we were at first, and daily see new cause to admire the wisdom and goodness of Him who fitted us for each other, and brought us together. I have, I may almost say, *more* temporal mercies than I wish for, and they are continually increasing; they come without asking; but neither by asking, nor in any other way, am I equally conscious of obtaining those spiritual blessings which I wish for, and which seem indispensably necessary. However, I do not flatter myself that my present happiness will continue long. Perhaps a few weeks will deprive me of her whose society constitutes so large a share of it. God's will be done. I trust that he has, in some measure, prepared me for such an event. I have viewed it in every possible point of light; and, so far as I can judge, feel willing—yes, blessed be his name!—perfectly willing that he should do what he will with his own. * * * * We shall have your prayers, I doubt not. O how much am I already indebted to them!

"I cannot close without adverting again to the blessed change you mention in our family. Give my love to E. Charge H. and P. to *strive* as well as seek; to *repent* and pray—and not to pray first in order to repent afterwards. And urge Eliza to follow the example of her brothers, and remember her Creator in the days of her youth."

"*March* 27, 1812.

"MY EVER DEAR SON,

"Your last was, indeed, fraught with precious tidings; and we are now to view you and your dear Louisa as sustaining a new and very important relation in life. May gracious Heaven look with benignity upon this dear object of your mutual affections, and realize your best wishes in its behalf. Precious babe! already do I clasp it in my affections, and implore the blessing of Heaven upon it. Great is the fatigue, the care, the anxiety of rearing a family; but if it is performed aright it is a blessed work. You have yet to learn how difficult the task, and how much patience, prudence, and grace is requisite to qualify us to be faithful to the sacred trust deposited in our keeping. Yet, for your encouragement, and as a debt of gratitude due to our most gracious Parent, I freely acknowledge myself amply compensated for all I have ever suffered or done for my Edward. Alas! I have been exceedingly deficient in my duty to my children; but with what ineffable goodness has God pardoned my unfaithfulness, and noticed every sincere attempt to discharge, in any measure, the important duties of a mother, and, in some instances, done more for them than I ever thought or asked. May He enable you to receive this little one from his gracious hands, and, as he requires, bring it up for him. You were very kind to write me so soon; it was a proof of affection for which my heart thanks you—but we are looking impatiently for another letter.

"Your good father* put on one of his best smiles, upon hearing he was a grandfather. 'Ah!' he says, 'what is it? a son, or a daughter?' with other inquiries. He smiled when he read—'babe made the house ring;' and observed, you would not want for music of that kind, he supposed. He is in very good health, and now attending a conference in a remote part of the town. * * * *

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*The father of Mr. Payson, though he appears less prominent in this Memoir than his mother, was, nevertheless, deservedly ranked among the first men in New-Hampshire. Indeed, he stood high in the confidence of the religious public throughout New-England; and his counsel and active exertions were much employed in promoting the general interests of literature and religion. In furtherance of these, he made several long journeys on horseback; once or twice as far as Philadelphia, on business for Dartmouth College, of which he was one of the Trustees. He was also a member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as was his son after him. His various public engagements, in addition to his pastoral duties, so engrossed his time, that the family correspondence devolved almost entirely on Mrs. Payson, who held "the pen of a ready writer." It was unavoidable, therefore, that in a memoir, made up in part of epistolary correspondence, the mother should occupy the more conspicuous place.

"May you be guided safely amidst the innumerable snares which await our every step, and your path, like the rising light, shine more and more unto the perfect day. Thus prays

"YOUR AFFECTIONATE MOTHER."

In December, 1811, the senior pastor's relation to the church was dissolved, and the sole care of the congregation devolved on him. Such an event seldom fails to divert the attention of a people from the important concern of personal religion. But such does not appear to have been the effect in the present case, to any very lamentable extent—the accession to the church this year being thirty-nine, and the subsequent year considerably greater than any preceding. He closed the labors of this year with a most seasonable discourse from 2 Cor. 4 : 13, *We also believe, and therefore speak;* in which he attempted to state the principal doctrines which Paul professed to believe—to show that he did actually believe them—that he had sufficient reasons to believe them—and that this belief necessarily led him to preach and conduct in the manner he did. The sermon is a happy exemplification of ministerial address and of ministerial faithfulness. He could not have taken a more unexceptionable method of presenting his own views, than by exhibiting what Paul believed and taught; nor more completely have justified the earnestness with which he pressed them upon his hearers, than by bringing into view the momentous interests which they involve. To those who are familiar with the epistles of Paul, it is hardly necessary to say that his sketch asserts the fall of man, and the consequent universal depravity of the human race; and the other doctrines peculiar to the Christian system, which necessarily result from this, respecting the personal glories and mediatorial offices of Christ, and the way of a sinner's justification and acceptance with God. It was a popular and useful defence of evangelical doctrines, and of ministerial zeal, and was applied to the auditory with pungent force.

His diary during this year authorizes some inferences besides that of his spirituality and devotion to his work. A few short extracts of each kind will form an appropriate conclusion to the chapter:

"*July* 17. Heard much to-day of the rage of opposers; found others much discouraged by it. Was driven by it to the throne of grace, and there found unusual enlargement in pleading for the effusion of the Spirit. Never felt more drawn out in prayer for this, and could not help hoping that he would espouse our cause. Was deeply affected with the sovereign goodness of God.

"*Aug*. O what a privilege it would be to have strength to labor all the time for God!

"*Sept*. 24, 25. Was called up at midnight by some mischievous person, and sent off to see a person said to be dying. . . . Found it a serious joke to me, for I took cold, and was sick several days.

"*Sept*. 29. Had a most refreshing season this morning in prayer. Felt most intense hatred of sin, and desired to be free from its power.

"*Oct*. 5. Have been abundantly convinced to-day that it is not a vain thing to call upon God. Was remarkably assisted in preparing for to-morrow. In the evening was favored with an uncommonly precious season in prayer. O how different does every thing appear when God is present! He is indeed all in all to me.

" *Oct.* 8. Enjoyed a most delightful season in prayer. Had such strong confidence in God, from a view of his willingness to give, that I felt ready to ask and expect every thing in his power to bestow. Knew not how to stop, till I was utterly exhausted.

" *Oct.* 10. Had some different views of Christ and heaven from any I ever before enjoyed, so that I felt the fullest assurance of salvation, and wished to be saved, that I might praise and love God perfectly.

" *Oct.* 22. Was enabled to cast all my cares on the Lord, and felt lightened. Never did the Bible seem so sweet, never did the light of God's countenance seem so exquisitely precious as now; nor did I ever more need it.

" *Oct.* 24. In the course of the day saw an Indian. Was instantly struck and much affected with a sense of his wretched condition. Never had such feelings before. In the evening had great freedom in praying for poor savages and others who are destitute of the light of the Gospel.

" *Nov.* 7. Felt a little revived. Set up a little prayer meeting in my family for a revival, and had some liberty.

" *Nov.* 28. Had a most refreshing and delightful season in prayer this morning. Felt something of the life and power of religion through the day. In the evening preached, . . . and was uncommonly assisted, and the people appeared much affected. Felt much gratitude to God for his assistance, and much encouraged respecting a revival."

CHAPTER XIII.

Forms of prayer—Thoughts on public prayer—His sincerity a grand means of his success.

"You would greatly oblige me by loaning me a copy of your prayer to-day," said a distinguished lady to Dr. Payson, as he was retiring from the house of worship on a memorable occasion. She was surprised on being told that it had vanished with the breath which gave it utterance. This lady was not an attendant on his ministry, but had come at this time with the expectation of seeing La Fayette in the assembly, and, in common with many others, was filled with admiration of the intercessory part of the exercises, as differing from all she had ever heard, in richness and appropriateness of matter, as well as in fervor of utterance. Few, it is believed, ever heard him for the first time, even in the family or on the most common occasion, without experiencing kindred emotions. The wonder too, was enhanced, rather than diminished, by every repetition of the exercise. To those whose devotions he led for twenty years, in the sanctuary, in the prayer-meeting, by the sick bed, at festivals and funerals, every prayer seemed to have all the freshness of originality. His resources for this duty appeared to be absolutely inexhaustible. There was something in his prayers powerful to arrest and fix attention—something which seized and absorbed the faculties of the soul, and separated it, for the time being at least, from its connections with "this present evil world." The full, deep, reverent, flexible, suppliant tones of his voice, as far removed from the cant of the fanatic as they were from the levity of the witling, contributed something to the effect of his public devotions.

The question has been asked by more than one distinguished minister since Dr. Payson's death, whether he left behind him any written forms of prayer. So far from this, it is believed he never *wrote a prayer.* There are, indeed, interspersed throughout his private writings and sermons, numerous ejaculations and supplicatory paragraphs; but nothing intended exclusively as a prayer. His "Confession and Form of Covenant," in a preceding chapter, bears the nearest resemblance to a prayer of any thing which has been discovered from his pen, and will give a better idea than any description, of the leading impression which his prayers produced on the hearers, namely, the infinite disparity which exists between God and the creature, at the same time that it brings to view numerous particulars in which this contrast may be seen. "God is in heaven, and we upon earth," was the great truth which stood forth with distinguished prominence in his invocations, confessions, pleadings, intercessions, and ascriptions. "God is in this place," was a truth not less vividly impressed on the minds of his auditors when he poured out his soul in prayer. They saw, they felt that he pleaded with a *present* God. His prayers conformed, with singular felicity, to his own definition of the exercise, which makes it "a kind of devout poetry, the whole subject matter of which is furnished by the heart, and the understanding is only allowed to shape and arrange the effusions of the heart in the manner best adapted to honor the Being to whom prayer is addressed, and to excite and direct the devotional feelings of his worshipers."

But a thousand forms of his prayers even, could never teach another to pray like him. He neither found for himself, nor could he mark out for others, a "royal road" to the throne of grace; and the "gift of prayer," for which he was so eminent, was not attained without corresponding efforts on his part. It was by his daily *retired* practice, that he became so skillful and prevailing a pleader with his God. There can be no doubt on this point. His journal, through several successive years, records repeated seasons of prayer for almost every day, together with the state of his affections, and the exercise or want of those graces which constitute the "spirit of supplication." It requires much of a devotional spirit even to read these perpetually recurring descriptions of his "wrestling in prayer," of his "near access to the mercy-seat," as well as of those difficulties which sometimes barred his approach; for, to an undevout mind, they would present nothing but a wearisome, disgusting, endless monotony. When the inventive character of his mind is considered, its exquisite delight in every thing that was original, these records exhibit the most infallible evidence of his love for devotion. His continuing *instant in prayer*, be is circumstances what they might, is the most noticeable fact in his history, and points out the duty of all who would rival his eminency. There is no magic about it. "The arrow that would pierce the clouds must go from the nerved arm and the bent bow." But if prayer, to be successful, must be ardent, so must it be not fitful, but habitual.

If, however, he has not left a form, he has, happily, left some thoughts on public prayer, which will be of greater value, especially to ministers of the Gospel; and as in his practice he illustrated his own instructions, a stranger to him may obtain from them a better knowledge of his manner than from any description of it by another hand.

"WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPAL EXCELLENCES WHICH SHOULD BE CULTIVATED, AND THE DEFECTS WHICH SHOULD BE AVOIDED, BY MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR PUBLIC DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES?

"The excellence of any performance consists in its being adapted to answer the end for which it is designed. So far as it is not adapted to answer that end, it must be considered defective. The design of public prayer, considered as a part of ministerial duty, is to honor the Being to whom it is addressed, and to excite and direct the devotional feelings of his worshipers. These two objects, though distinct, are inseparably connected, and are to be attained by the same means; for it will ever be found, that that mode of performing the duty of public prayer which is best adapted to promote the honor of God, is best calculated to excite and direct the devotional feelings of the hearers. That our devotional performances may secure the attainment of these united objects, they must be the echo of a fervently pious heart, guided by

' judicious and enlightened mind, to the voice of God, as uttered in his works and his word. An expression of the psalmist will illustrate my meaning:—'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' In a similar manner should our public addresses to God be the echo of his language to us. Our adorations and ascriptions of praise should thus respond to what he has revealed of his natural and moral perfections; our confessions, to the charges which he has preferred against us, and to the punishments with which he threatens us; our petitions and intercessions, to his commands, his promises, and the description he has given of our own wants, and those of our fellow-creatures; and our thanksgivings, to the favors which he has bestowed on ourselves, our countrymen, and our race. When our devotional performances thus echo back the voice of God, we cannot fail to promote both his glory and the edification of our people. We then follow a guide which cannot mislead us; we express the very feelings which his language to us is designed and calculated to excite; we set our seal to the truth of his declarations, say Amen to all that he has seen fit to reveal to us, and teach our hearers to do the same. Thus, while we avoid the too common fault of *preaching* in prayer, our prayers will preach, and prove no less instructive than our sermons. We shall at the same time excite them to pray, and teach them how to pray. While we speak as the mouth of our people to God, we shall, in an indirect, but most impressive manner, be the mouth of God to our people, and set before them their duty, as it respects both faith and practice, in a way least calculated to offend, and in those solemn moments when the exhibition of truth is most likely to affect them.

"If the preceding remarks be just, it will be easy to infer from them what are the principal faults which should be avoided by us in leading the devotions of our hearers.

"In the first place, I conceive that our devotional performances are too often the language of the understanding, rather than of the heart. It has been observed that they should be the echo of a fervently-pious heart, guided by an enlightened understanding, to the voice of God. It is not, perhaps, uncandid to remark, that our expressions in public prayer are not always guided by an enlightened understanding; but still less frequently, probably, are they the echo of a fervently-pious heart to the voice of God. They too often consist almost entirely of passages of Scripture—not always judiciously chosen or well arranged—and common-place phrases, which have been transmitted down for ages, from one generation of ministers to another, selected and put together just as we would compose a sermon or essay, while the heart is allowed no share in the performance; so that we may more properly be said to *make a prayer*, than to *pray*. The consequence is, that our devotional performances are too often cold and spiritless: as the heart did not assist in composing, it disdains to aid in uttering them. They have almost as much of a form as if we made use of a liturgy; while the peculiar excellences of a liturgy are wanting. Our hearers soon become familiarized to our expressions, and not unfrequently learn to anticipate them; and, though they may possibly be instructed their devotional feelings are not excited

"That public prayer may produce its proper and designed effects upon their hearts, it should be, if I may so express it, a kind of devout poetry. As in poetry, so in prayer, the whole subject matter should be furnished by the heart; and the understanding should be allowed only to shape and arrange the effusions of the heart in the manner best adapted to answer the end designed. From the fullness of a heart overflowing with holy affections, as from a copious fountain, we should pour forth a torrent of pious, humble, and ardently-affectionate feelings; while our understandings only shape the channel, and teach the gushing streams of devotion where to flow, and when to stop. In such a prayer every pious heart among our hearers will join. They will hear a voice and utterance given to their own feelings. They will hear their own desires and emotions expressed more fully and perspicuously than they could express them themselves. Their hearts will spring forward to meet and unite with the heart of the speaker. The well of water which our Savior assures us is in all who drink of his Spirit, will rise and burst its way through the rubbish of worldly cares and affections which too often choke it; and the stream of devotion from many hearts will unite and flow on in one broad tide to the throne of Jehovah; while, with one mind and one mouth, minister and people glorify God. Such was the prayer of Ezra, and such its effects:—'And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, amen, with lifting up of their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the Lord with their faces toward the ground.'

"Leading the devotion of our people in this manner will preserve us from another fault, less important indeed, but not less common than that which has just been mentioned, and which, in part, is occasioned by it. It consists in uttering the different parts of prayer in the same tone. When our prayers are the language of the understanding only, this will always be done; but not so when they flow from the heart. No person need be informed, that, in our intercourse with each other, a different modification of the voice is employed to express every different emotion of the heart. No one would expect to hear a condemned malefactor plead for his life and return thanks for a pardon in the same tone. And why is it not equally unnatural for sinful beings, condemned to eternal death, to plead for pardon and return thanks for its bestowal in the same tone? Yet how often is this done! How often do we hear prayers flow on, from the commencement to the close, in the same uniform tone, with scarcely a perceptible inflection of the voice! Yet no two things can differ more widely than the feelings which are expressed in different parts of the same prayer. Surely, then, a corresponding difference ought to be perceived in the modifications of the voice. In every other public expression of our feelings such a difference is expected and required. The effect of the most eloquent composition would be greatly impaired, not to say wholly destroyed, by a delivery perfectly monotonous. The effects of the same cause upon devotional performances will be similar. Where no fervency of feeling is indicated, it will usually be found that none is excited; and, since one principal design of public prayer is to excite the devotional feelings of the hearers, it is evident that a fault which so powerfully tends to defeat this design cannot be a fault of trifling consequence. I am however aware that in attempting to avoid this fault, the exercise of great care and of much judgment and good taste is requisite to preserve us from an affected or theatrical manner, which is a fault much more to be deprecated. Still I conceive that when we feel as we ought, we shall find no difficulty or danger in this respect. Our hearts will then, without any effort on our part, insensibly teach us to express its emotions in a corresponding tone, and in the manner best adapted to excite similar feelings in the breasts of our hearers. But if our devotional feelings are habitually languid, if our hearts do not teach our lips, it is perhaps advisable to aim at nothing beyond a monotonous solemnity, rather than, by affecting what we do not feel, to incur the certain displeasure of our Master, and the probable contempt of our most judicious hearers. If we have no thoughts or feelings that glow, it is worse than useless to affect 'words that burn.'

"Another fault, which is not unfrequently found in our devotional performances, I know not how to describe better than by saying that it consists in praying more like an awakened but still impenitent sinner, or more as such a character might be supposed to pray, than like a real Christian. Different causes probably tend to the adoption of this method. Some are apparently led to it by doubts respecting their own character. They often suspect that they are not truly pious, and therefore they fear to utter the language of a pious heart. Others seem to adopt it in consequence of false humility. They fear it would be thought indicative of pride should they use expressions which intimate that they think themselves to be the real disciples of Christ. A third class probably adopt this method with a view to offer prayers in which awakened, but still impenitent sinners may join. But whatever may be the motives which lead to the adoption of such a method, it is, I conceive, a fault which ought to be avoided. It is, indeed, a common, and, with some limitation, a just remark, that a minister is the mouth of his people to God. It is, however, of the pious part of his congregation only that he is the mouth. His prayer, then, should be the echo, not of an impenitent, but of a pious heart to the voice of God. He should pray *with* those who are pious, and *for* those who are not so. Instead of praying that himself and those who unite with him may exercise the feelings of a Christian, he should explicitly express those feelings. This is necessary for his own sake, if he be truly pious; for, if he be so, he cannot sincerely utter the language of an impenitent heart. It is necessary for the sake of his pious hearers; for, while he is attempting to form a prayer in which all may join, he will utter many expressions in which they cannot unite. It is also necessary even for the sake of his impenitent hearers; for it is highly important for them to be convinced that they do not, and, with their present feelings, cannot pray; and nothing will tend more effectually to convince them of this important truth, than listening to prayers in which truly pious feelings and holy exercises are distinctly expressed. For similar reasons it is desirable that we should not always pray in a manner suited only to inexperienced, weak, or declining Christians. Instead of descending to their standard, we must endeavor to raise them to ours. If we wish our people to feel dissatisfied with their present attainments, and to become eminent Christians, we must accustom them to hear the devotional language of eminent Christians, by uttering such language in our prayers, if, indeed, we can do it without uttering what we do not feel. As an eagle tempts her young to soar higher than they would dare to do were they not encouraged by her example, so the minister of Christ should, occasionally at least, allure his people to the higher region of devotion, by taking a bolder flight than usual, and uttering the language of strong faith, ardent love, unshaken confidence, assured hope, and rapturous gratitude, admiration, and joy. Some of his hearers can, probably at all times, follow him, and many others who at first tremble and hesitate—many who would scarcely dare adopt the same language in their closets, will gradually catch the sacred flame—their hearts will burn within them. While their pastor leads the way, they will mount up as on eagles' wings towards heaven, and return from the house of prayer, not cold and languid as they entered, but glowing with the fires of devotion. In this, as well as in other respects, it will in some measure be 'like people, like priest.' If we thus strike the golden harp of devotion, we shall soon find our pious hearers able to accompany us through its whole compass of sound, from the low notes of humble, penitential sorrow, up to the high, heart-thrilling tones of rapturous joy, admiration, love, and praise, which are in union with the harps of the redeemed before the throne.

" Another fault, sometimes found in devotional performances which are otherwise unexceptionable, is the want of sufficient particularity. Indeed, most of our public prayers are too general. They bring so much into view, that nothing is seen distinctly. It is well known, that, if we except sublime and terrible objects, nothing affects the mind, unless it be clearly and distinctly perceived. If the most admired descriptive poems, and those which produce the greatest effect upon our feelings, be carefully examined, it will be found that they derive their power to affect us almost entirely from a minute and striking description of a few judiciously-selected particulars. It is the same with our devotional performances. We may praise God, or confess sin, or pray for mercy, or return thanks for divine favor, in a general way, without being ourselves affected, and without exciting the affections of our hearears. But when we descend to particulars, the effect is different. The mind receives, drop after drop, till it is full. We should, therefore, aim at as great a degree of particularity as the time allotted us and the variety of topics on which we must touch will allow. Especially is it important that we enter deeply and particularly into every part of Christian experience, and lay open all the minute ramifications and almost imperceptible workings of the pious heart in its various situations, and thus show our hearers to themselves in every point of view. In a word, our public prayers should resemble, as nearly as propriety will allow, the breathings of an humble, judicious, and fervently pious Christian in his private devotions. The prayer of the pulpit differs too much—it should differ as little as possible—from the prayer of the closet. A neglect in this particular often renders our performances uninteresting and unacceptable to those whom we should most desire to gratify.

"Such, I conceive, are the principal defects which are most frequently found in our devotional performances. It is obvious that they are all occasioned, either wholly or in part, by a languid state of devotional feeling; and that the only effectual remedy is to be sought in the diligent cultivation of a frame of temper habitually devout. That a minister may lead the devotions of his people in the most suitable and edifying manner, it seems indispensable that he should possess a mind deeply imbued with divine truth; a mind, into the very frame and texture of which the doctrines of revelation are wrought; and a heart thoroughly broken and humbled for sin, and tremblingly alive to the voice of God, and ever glowing with celestial fire. He, who, with such a mind and such a heart, lives much in his closet, praying, as the apostle expresses it, in the Holy Ghost, and habitually imploring his assistance to help his infirmities, will always lead the devotions of his people in a judicious, edifying, and acceptable manner; nor will he need the aid of a precomposed form. In his prayers, as well as in his sermons, he will constantly bring out of his treasury things new and old. But if our hearts will not pray, or teach us in what manner to cry to our heavenly Father and Redeemer, our understandings must; and we must either compose or borrow forms for that purpose. How far, in this case, we can be considered as called to the work of the ministry, or fitted for it, is not for me to say; but surely he who can contemplate the wonders of creation, and yet find nothing to say to his Maker—still more, he who can meditate on the mysteries of redeeming love, and behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, without feeling praises ready to burst spontaneously from his lips, has some reason to fear that he possesses little of the spirit of heaven, and that he has never learned that new song, which none can learn but those who are redeemed from the earth; for, with reference to this subject, it may be emphatically said, in the words of inspiration, 'the heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and addeth learning to his lips.'"

Such public prayers as he offered were singularly adapted to affect the mind of an assembly and prepare them for the reception of religious truths, besides being the appointed means of obtaining the influences of the Holy Spirit "to render the word effectual to salvation."

To his ardent and persevering prayers must no doubt be ascribed, in a great measure, his distinguished and almost uninterrupted success; and, next to these, *the undoubted sincerity of his belief* in the truths which he inculcated. His language, his conversation, and whole deportment, were such as brought home and fastened on the minds of his hearers the conviction that he *believed, and therefore spoke.* So important did he regard such a conviction in the attendants on the ministry, that he made it the topic of an able address to his clerical brethren; and indeed, had his description of a "good minister of Jesus Christ' been drawn by another hand, his familiar acquaintances might well have supposed that himself sat for the picture. Though he drew crowds around him, there was nothing of stage effect either in his personal appearance or in his eloquence—no imposing attitudes or gestures—no extremes of intonation—no affectation of tears. It was simple nature, sanctified by grace, uttering the deep convictions of the heart, and pleading with fellow-sinners to become reconciled to God It was the eloquence of truth spoken in love. The words seemed to come from his mouth encompassed by that glowing atmosphere in which they left the heart, and to *brand* their very impression in every heart on which they fell. Often did his clear exhibitions of truth, and his full and plain exposures of the obliquities of men, prove the occasion of bitter and outrageous feelings in the bosoms of many; but rarely, indeed, could the individual be found who ventured to express a doubt of his honesty and sincerity. He was always in earnest, and "commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

CHAPTER XIV.

The pastor in action—Methods of exciting, sustaining and extending a due interest in religious concerns—Preaching, administration of ordinances, church fast, conference, inquiry meetings.

ALTHOUGH most of the preceding chapter, if changed from the didactic form to that of narration, would, for the extent to which it reaches, present a true history of its author, yet there are other details from his own pen, interspersed throughout his familiar correspondence, which will be found scarcely less instructive, and at the same time exhibit a fuller developement of the nature, extent and variety of his pastoral labors We shall commence our extracts with a letter written in 1812 to a young clergyman, then recently settled in the ministry, who had sought his instruction and advice on the subject of pastoral duties. It has already been stated that Mr. Payson was now the sole pastor of the church; and it was in this year that thirty-one of its members were separated from it, and, by a distinct organization, constituted the "Chapel Congregational Church in Portland," over which Mr. Kellogg was placed as pastor. The vacancy hereby created was more than filled—forty-eight persons being added to the church within the same year. It was distinguished beyond former years for "the fruits of the Spirit."

"Dear Brother,

"Your letter requesting 'information and advice' has just reached me. I rejoice in the circumstances that led to such a request. I rejoice still more that you feel 'ignorant, and inexperienced, and inadequate to the charge which has devolved upon you.' We must feel so, or we shall meet with little success.

"I can however assure you, for your encouragement, that you cannot possibly be more ignorant and inexperienced than I was at the time of my settlement. I knew just nothing at all of my business; but I knew a little, O how little! of my own ignorance. This led me to pray almost incessantly; and, somehow or other, I have, as I trust, been preserved from fatal mistakes, and not suffered to ruin either myself or my people, as I sometimes feared that I should. He who has thus guided me, and thousands of others equally foolish, will, I trust, guide you. The best advice I can give you is, to look to Him. This I doubt not you do; but you cannot do it too much. If we would do much for God, we must ask much of God we must be men of prayer; we must, almost literally pray without ceasing. You have doubtless met with Luther's remark—"Three things make a divine—prayer, meditation, and temptation." My dear brother, I cannot insist on this too much. Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing necessary for a minister, especially in seasons of revival The longer you live in the ministry the more deeply I am persuaded, you will be convinced of this. Pray then, my dear brother, pray, pray, pray. Read the account of Solomon's choice, 1 Kings, 3 : 5–15. If, like him, you choose wisdom, and pray for it, it will be yours.

"The next thing in importance is, as I conceive, that your church should be excited to pray for the influences of the divine Spirit; and that they should frequently meet for this purpose. For, though private prayer may be as effectual, it does not so directly tend to honor God as that which is more public. God converts sinners for his own glory, and he will have all the glory of their conversion. Nothing tends more directly to give him the glory than social prayer. In that duty we explicitly acknowledge, not only to him, but to our fellow-creatures, that nothing but the influences of his Spirit can render any means effectual, and that we are entirely dependent for those influences on his sovereign will. In a word, we acknowledge that in the conversion of sinners he is all, and we are nothing.

"With respect to those who are awakened, I conceive it is our duty to act as fellow-workers with the divine Spirit; to insist principally on those truths of which he first convinces them; and to endeavor, both by our preaching and conversation, to bring them to the same point to which he aims to bring them. This point is complete self-despair and hope in Christ. The former is a pre-requisite to the latter. I therefore aim, in the first place, to increase their convictions of sins, especially of the great, damning sin of unbelief. If they ask, What shall we do? I never dare give them any other answer than that given by Christ and his apostles: 'Repent, and believe the Gospel.' I insist much on the character of God; the strictness, extent, and spirituality of his law; the various artifices, deceptions, and excuses of the heart; the false hopes of sinners and hypocrites; the nature of true and false conversion; and the great danger of being deceived. I also frequently warn them of the dreadful consequences of delaying repentance, grieving the Spirit, losing their convictions, or resting on false hopes, like the stony-ground hearers. I labor especially to convince them that all the difficulties which oppose their salvation lie in their own hearts—that Christ is willing to save them—but they are unwilling to be saved in his way, and are therefore without excuse. This is a very important point. I have seen none go back who appeared to be truly convinced of this. In addition to this, I say much of the glory, beauty, and sufficiency of Christ, and of the perfect freeness of the blessings which he offers, and endeavor to show them the horrid pride, ingratitude, &c. of neglecting to accept of them. These are some of the principal subjects on which I preach to inquirers. You will easily determine what are the most proper texts from which tc explain and enforce them.

" With respect to our inquiry meetings, I can only tell you that we have them once a week; afternoons for females, evenings for males. It is difficult to persuade them to converse as freely as might be wished. You will find, however, as your experience increases, that it is not essential that they should say much. A single sentence will often give you a clue to their character and feelings. If you wish them to converse with you with freedom, you must visit them at home. Your greatest danger will be in comforting them too soon. All comfort is dangerous till they surrender unconditionally to the sovereign grace of God. It is much safer to err on the other side."

The extract which follows describes the origin of a meeting that was long continued and signally blessed:

"*Nov.* 14, 1814.

"Three weeks since I preached to the young, from the words of Christ when twelve years old—'I must be about my Father's business.' At the close of the sermon I invited all the young men who were fully determined to engage immediately in their Father's work to meet me in the evening, and at the same time told them I was not confident that any of them would come. However, about forty attended. After stating to them the difficulties and temptations they would meet with, and the sacrifices they must make in a religious course, I advised them to consider of it a fortnight; and, if they still resolved to persevere, to meet me again. About thirty came the second evening; and, though I cannot calculate upon all, or even the major part of them, becoming Christians, yet I hope some of them will."

Two or three times during his ministry he adopted what would be generally regarded as bold measures, and they would have been absolutely rash and injurious, had they not originated in a sincere and glowing zeal for God and the eternal welfare of men. It would be hazardous for another to imitate him herein, without some portion of his spirit. Yet who, that estimates the worth of the soul, will dare to censure his conduct, or say that the importance of the object was not at least commensurate with his zeal?

"*Feb.* 21, 1815.

"We have a great revival commencing. We have been expecting it some time; and a few weeks since, at the close of a suitable sermon, I informed the congregation that I believed God was about to bless us, and told them that the quarterly fast of the church was at hand, and that, if they would consent to unite with the church in the fast, we would meet in the meeting-house, instead of the conference-room, where we usually assemble on such occasions. At the same time I invited those who were willing to meet the church to signify it by rising. About two-thirds of the congregation instantly rose. It was a most solemn scene. The church, to whom the measure was altogether unexpected, were almost overwhelmed with various emotions, and scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry, to hope or fear. You may well suppose that the interval between the Sabbath and the fast was a trying season to me. I felt that I had completely committed myself—that my all was at stake—that, if a blessing did not attend the measure, every mouth would be open to condemn it; and it seemed as if I could hardly surgive a disappointment. I should not have taken such a step, had I not believed I had sufficient reason for trusting that God would bear me out in it; and I thought if he did not bear me out, I never should again know what to expect—never should feel confidence to pray. I expected severe trials, but had few fears of the event. The trials came, but they did not come in the way that I expected, and therefore I was surprised and overcome by them. The day of the fast was the most dreadful day of my life—the day in which I had most dreadful proofs of more than diabolical depravity of heart. The meeting-house was full, but things did not go on in the manner I had hoped and expected. I thought all was lost; and I now wonder that I lived through it—that a broken heart, as Mr. Newton says disappointed pride and madness are called, was not the consequence. For some days I saw and heard nothing encouraging, and my distress was unabated; but at the next inquiry meeting I found more than sixty inquirers. This number, within a week, was considerably increased, and eight or ten have obtained comfort. The prospect is now more encouraging than it has been since my settlement."

Below is an incidental mention of the multiplicity of his labors, from which may be inferred the despatch with which he habitually executed his appropriate work:

"*May* 21, 1816.

"My avocations were never so numerous. I have two sermons which I wish, if possible, to prepare for the press, but fear I never shall find time. I have also three ordination sermons to preach within two months, sermons before two missionary societies within the same time, and on the second Sabbath in July I have an engagement to preach in Portsmouth, before the managers of the Female Asylum. Besides this, I preach four sermons and attend two inquiry meetings weekly, &c. &c. Judge then whether I am not worn out, and whether I do not need your prayers more than ever. As to a revival, my wishes for it are not, cannot be too strong, if they are disinterested, and not selfish. Though I am wearing myself out, it is, I sometimes fear, rather in the service of self than in the service of God; and this reflection imbitters every thing I do. It would be heaven to labor for God, but it is misery to labor for one's self. As to the slang you heard about a revelation, I need not tell you that there is no truth in it. However, I hope the Lord has some people yet to be gathered in here. We have admitted thirty-three since the year came in, and nine stand propounded; the number of inquirers about one hundred, and slowly increasing."

"*April* 13, 1820.

"We have some encouraging appearances, as we have often had before, but nothing decisive. Last Sabbath I invited the male part of the congregation who were willing to be considered inquirers after religion, to meet me in the evening. Between thirty and forty attended, but I fear that very few of them are deeply impressed. We have about the same number of females who are in a similar state; and it seems, as it has for a long time, that if God would work a little more powerfully, there would be a great revival. But I desire to wait."

"*August* 6, 1821.

"As to my desires for a revival, I have not, and never had the least doubt that they are exceedingly corrupt and sinful. A thousand wrong motives have conspired to excite them. Still I do not believe that my desires were ever half so strong as they ought to be; nor do I see how a minister can help being in a 'constant fever' in such a town as this, where his Master is dishonored and souls are destroyed in so many ways. You can scarcely conceive how many things occur, almost daily, to distress and crush me All these are nothing when my Master is with me; but when he is absent, I am of all men most miserable. But now he is with me, and I am happy.

"We have just set up a meeting on a new plan. Notes to this effect are put into a box at the door:—'A member of this church desires prayers for the conversion of a husband, a child, a parent,' &c. as the case may be. These notes are then read, and prayers are offered. We have had but one meeting; the evening was rainy, but nearly forty notes were given in, and it was the most solemn meeting we have had for a long time. Among the notes were two from persons who think they were deceived when they made a profession of religion, desiring prayers that they may be truly converted. The church has also had a day of thanksgiving lately, to acknowledge what God has done for us, and it was a comfortable season. These things give me some encouragement; but we have been so often disappointed, that I scarcely dare to hope."

A letter to a young clergyman, written soon after the preceding extract, contains a still more complete sketch of his labors at this time. It has been extensively copied by the religious periodicals of the country, and by one has been objected to, as exalting human efforts in place of the grace of God. If his language is susceptible of such a construction, it most unhappily misrepresents his judgment and his heart. For, though he was "abundant in labors," no man ever ascribed less *efficiency* to means, or felt more entirely his exclusive dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

"*Portland*, *Aug*. 17, 1821.

'My dear Brother,

"I have just received your kind letter, and hope it has done me some good. I thank you for it, though the perusal of it has given me much pain. It is evident that you think far more favorably of me than I deserve; and your applying to me for advice shames and mortifies me exceedingly. But I dare not say what I feel on this subject, lest you should think me humble, which is far enough from being the case. Besides, you wish me to write respecting myself and my labors, and this is the very subject on which I am most unwilling to write, because I find it most dangerous. It affords an opportunity for gratifying an accursed spirit of self-seeking, which has ever been my bane and torment, and which insinuates itself into every thing I say or do. I know not that I have ever spoken of myself without furnishing cause for sorrow and shame. How, then, can I write as you request me to do? or what can I say that will be of any service to you? But you will reply that God can bless the feeblest means. True; and therefore I will write though I foresee that I shall smart for it.

You ask for a general view of my pastoral labors, method of preaching, &c. &c. Since the failure of my health, I preach but three sermons in a week—two on the Sabbath, and one on Thursday evening. On that evening and Sabbath morning I preach without notes, but generally form a skeleton of my sermon. I should like to write more, but my health will not permit; and I find that when any good is done, it is my extempore sermons which do it. I am afraid of producing a faith which stands not in the power of God, but in the wisdom of men, and therefore make as little use as possible of human arguments, but confine myself to a plain, simple exhibition of divine truth. The sword of the Spirit will not wound if it has a scabbard on it. I also aim to preach the truths of the Gospel in a practical and experimental, rather than a dry and speculative manner. In preaching to professing Christians, I endeavor to rouse and humble, rather than to comfort them; for, if they can be kept humble, comfort will follow of course. Besides, I do not suppose that Christians need as much consolation now as they did in the primitive ages, when exposed to persecution.

"Our church is divided into seven districts; the members of each district meet for prayer and conversation once a month, and the brethren residing in each district are a standing committee of the church for that district, to supply the wants of the poor, and bring before the church, in due form, any case of discipline which may occur.—We have a monthly meeting of all the brethren for business, a church conference every Tuesday evening, a prayer meeting on Friday evening, a monthly prayer meeting for the Sabbath schools, and the monthly union concert for prayer. We have also an inquiry meeting for males, on Sabbath evening, and for females, on Friday afternoon.

"As to method in the division of time, I have none; but live altogether extempore. This is partly owing to the wretched state of my health, which deprives me of at least three days in every week, and partly to continual interruptions from visiters, whom I must see. I knew not how to bear this, till I met with the following maxim of an eminent minister: '*The man who wants me is the man I want.*'

"My rule, in regard to visiting, is to visit as much as time and health will permit. I make none but pastoral visits. I gave my people to understand, when I was settled, that they must never invite me to dine or sup when they did not wish to have the conversation turn wholly on religious subjects. This has saved me much time and trouble.

"The books which I have found most useful to me are Edwards's works, Brainerd's Life, Newton's Letters, Owen's Treatise on Indwelling Sin, Mortification of Sin in Believers, and the 130th Psalm, and Thomas à Kempis's Imitation of Christ, translated by Payne—for Stanhope's translation I think not so good. If you have not seen Thomas à Kempis, I beg you to procure it. Some things you will not like; but, for spirituality and weanedness from the world, I know of nothing equal to it. Perhaps I ought to include in the above list, Baxter's Reformed Pastor, and Saints' Rest.

"It would require a volume to detail the experiments I have made, and the means I have used for a revival of religion; and, after it was written, it would not be worth reading. I will, however, just mention what we are doing now. We have established a prayer meeting on the following plan:—Members of the church, and others, if they think proper, present notes requesting prayers for the conversion of any friend or relative for whom they feel anxious. No names are mentioned. The notes are placed in a small box by the door, and afterwards handed to me to be read. We have had two meetings. They were uncommonly solemn, and many of the notes were very affecting. One was, '*A female stranger desires your prayers for her conversion.*' Another, '*One of the congregation desires your prayers for the conversion of her husband and herself.*' Several were from old professors, who fear that they have been deceived; and a great number from husbands, wives, and parents, desiring prayers for their partners, children, &c. When we came to spread all these cases before God as the only Giver of good things, the scene was awfully solemn and affecting.

* * * *

"I think with you, that the management of a revival is a very difficult thing. It is, I believe, a subject as yet but very imperfectly understood. At least, I know but very little of it.

"I think I can conceive, in some measure, of the inconvenience you experience in consequence of the great extent of your congregation. It must be exceedingly difficult to collect your church together as often as you would wish, and to perform ministerial duties. A minister, however, who has but a small people, is required to do all that he can, and you are required to do no more. Still it is exceedingly painful to see many things which need to be done, but which we cannot find time or strength to do. My congregation, as well as my heart, very much resembles the garden of the sluggard; and, what is worse, I find that most of my desires for the melioration of both proceed either from pride, or vanity, or indolence. I look at the weeds which overspread my garden, and breathe out an earnest wish that they were eradicated. But why? What prompts the wish? It may be that I may walk out and say to myself, 'In what fine order is my garden kept!' This is pride. Or it may be that my neighbors may look over the wall and say, 'How finely your garden flourishes!' This is vanity. Or I may wish for the destruction of the weeds because I am weary of pulling them up. This is indolence. Yet from such sources, I fear, do most of my desires for personal holiness and for the progress of religion among my people proceed. I hope and trust it is otherwise with you.

"As I write with perfect freedom, I will take the liberty to mention one thing more, which, if I always attended to it, would, I believe, be highly beneficial. The disciples, we read, 'returned to Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.' I think that if we would, every evening, come to our Master's feet and tell him where we have been, what we have done, what we have said, and what were the motives by which we have been actuated, it would have a salutary effect upon our whole conduct. While reading over each day's page of life with the consciousness that He was reading it with us, we should detect many errors and defects which would otherwise pass unnoticed. Pardon this hint. I trust you do not need it.

"I have written a long letter, and yet, I fear, said nothing which will be of the smallest service to you. But you must, as our kind Master does, take the will for the deed. May he fill you with the Holy Ghost and with faith, and make you instrumental of adding much people to the Lord. So prays your sincere friend."

He was particularly observant of current events, and careful to make them all subservient to the great purposes of his ministry. By these his exhortations were often enforced; and hence some of the severest reproofs which he administered were drawn. At the close of public worship, one Sabbath, he gave notice that the different churches in the town would observe the following Wednesday as a day of fasting and prayer for divine influences: and after mentioning that religious exercises would be attended in the morning, afternoon, and evening, he observed: "Should any be disposed to ask, with the Pharisees of old, 'To what purpose is this waste of time?' I would remind them of the attention lately bestowed on an earthly benefactor. One united, earnest request was made to him that he would visit this country, for which, in times of trial, he had sacrificed ease and domestic comfort, and hazarded his life and treasure. He acceded to the invitation of a grateful people; he has visited *you.* You spared neither time nor expense to give him an honorable reception. And have you not, my friends, a Heavenly Benefactor, from whom you receive every good and perfect gift? a Savior, who has given his life to redeem you from everlasting bondage and misery? When will one hearty, united request arise from this place, that our God and Redeemer will visit us? And should he come, would he be welcomed as was the benefactor just alluded to? It is true that, in one sense, God is ever present; but he can be with us in such a manner that his presence will be *felt*, and the effects of it made visible. And the effects of his absence, too, may be seen, while no cheering rays of his life-giving Spirit are imparted. And shall we grudge a day, to be devoted to special entreaty that he would come in the chariot of his salvation, from conquering to conquer? that he would make us glad with the light of his countenance? Was one day too short for all the acknowledgments which we were desirous to make to our nation's friend? and is it too long to be devoted to him who is the Redeemer of the world, from whom cometh our salvation, and whose favor is immortal life?"

Among his various methods of drawing attention to the subject of religion, and impressing the mind with its importance, the following is, perhaps, worthy of preservation, for the practical hint which it conveys:

"Once, in the course of my ministry, I made an analysis of all the sermons which I had preached to my people for six months, and embodied it in one sermon and preached it to them. They were astonished, and I was astonished, at the amount of truth which had been presented to them, and, to human appearance, with very little effect." How descriptive of his constant solicitude, and of the various exertions to which it prompted him, are the lines of the poet:

> "And as a bird each fond endearment tries
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies
> He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

It would be matter for lamentation if the preceding statements of insulated facts should be so interpreted as to convey to strangers an impression altogether erroneous respecting Dr. Payson's general manner of exercising the ministry. He was a stanch friend to the "good old way," and generally adhered to it in the discharge of ministerial duties: his deviations were circumstantial. He differed from others in the zeal and earnestness with which he prosecuted the ordinary routine of clerical services, more than in the novelty and extravagance of his measures. The new aspect which his congregation assumed, in consequence of the blessing of God upon his faithful and zealous labors, required meetings and exercises of a specific character, and, of course, some addition to their number. To render these in the highest degree subservient to the spiritual good of his charge was his uniform aim, in the pursuit of which he made the most felicitous use of every providential event and every noticeable fact in the circumstances of his people, as a means of enforcing truths and duties of immediate and indispensable importance. It should be remembered, too, that he was the established pastor, that he stood high in the affections and confidence of his people, who had witnessed the rapid growth of his extraordinary piety for a period of eight or ten years, without having discovered a single circumstance to discredit its reality or strength. They knew him to be a man of great simplicity of purpose ; and whatever might be their judgment of particular acts, they were sure he watched for their souls as one that must give account; and was not accustomed to "say a word to sinners, except when he had a broken heart himself."

The feelings which prompted and sustained his restless activity for the glory of God and the salvation of men very frequently disclose themselves in his correspondence and diary:

"*December* 26, 1821.

"I do not think you understand my feelings about a revival. Unless I am very much deceived, I have no controversy with God respecting it. But ought a minister to feel easy while his people are perishing and Christians are dishonoring their Master? Did not Paul feel great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his countrymen? All the joy and gratitude he felt in view of what God had done for him and by him could not remove that sorrow. And the prophet would weep day and night for the daughter of his people. Instead of feeling less, it seems to me that I ought to feel more, and to have no rest. But I do not murmur at God's dealings. I only wonder that he ever did any thing for me or by me; and that he has not, long since, cast me out of his vineyard. As to the bed-ridden female you mention, I see nothing very wonderful in her rejoicing and gratitude. Well may she rejoice and be grateful when she is filled full of divine consolation. She has outward trials, it is true; but what are they when Christ is present? Who wants candles when he has the sun? Give me her consolations and I will sing as loud as she does. And let her have my showers of fiery darts and my other trials, and, unless I am much mistaken, she will groan as much as I do. I have seen very young Christians terribly afflicted by bodily pain and sickness for months together, and all the time full of joy and thankfulness, and I have seen the same persons afterwards, when they were surrounded by temporal mercies, show very little of either. Things seem to be a little on the mending hand; and the church are again beginning to hope for a revival. Last Sabbath was an uncommonly solemn day."

"*August* 20, 1823.

"It has been, and still is, a season of spiritual deadness among us. I have preached so plainly, especially to the church, that I feared they would not bear it, and that we should come to an open rupture. However, they have borne it very well, and there seems now to be more of a disposition among them to make exertion; but it is impossible to say what the result will be.

"If you have not written to —— lately, it would be well to cheer him with a letter. Poor man! he seems to be just entering on Newton's second stage, the characteristic of which, you recollect, is *conflict.* However, I trust he will be carried safely through. I wish, with all my heart, that Satan would fight against the peace of some of our church more than he does; but he is too cunning to do that. He sees that they are slumbering, and he will take care not to wake them You can scarcely form an idea how soporific the air of a sea-port is, nor of the irresistible force with which the world assails Christians in such a place as this. The moment they step out of doors it rushes in at their eyes and ears, in ten thousand shapes; so that, unless their hearts are pre-occupied with better things, they are filled with it in a moment. By turns I expostulate, and plead, and warn, and threaten, and weep, and pray, and sometimes almost scold, but all in vain. The world drags away its victims, and laughs my feeble efforts to scorn."

"*December* 5, 1823.

"A few weeks since I set up a Bible class for young persons over fourteen years of age. About two hundred and fifty attend, and some of them appear interested; but none are awakened as yet. However, God must have some chosen ones among the rising generation, and he will, sooner or later, bring them in; but I fear that all, or nearly all, who have passed the meridian of life—I mean in my congregation—are given over to final hardness of heart."

"*January* 31, 1824.

"Yesterday was our quarterly fast, and I pursued a new method. I first confessed my own sins to the church, asked their forgiveness, and then requested them to unite with me in praying that God would forgive me, and ordain me afresh as their pastor. I then having, as I hope, cast the beam out of my own eye, proceeded to take the mote out of the eye of my brethren. I first called upon the deacons to follow my example, if they thought proper, by confessing their sins, and appointing one of their number to lead in prayer, that they might be forgiven. A similar call was then made upon the brethren, and, after that, upon the sisters, for whom I acted as mouth. A great deal was said which I cannot write, but for want of which you will not fully understand our method of proceeding, nor all the reasons of it. It must suffice to say, that we attempted to obey, on a large scale, the exhortation of James—'Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. I cannot but hope that it will prove to have been a profitable season, and that a blessing will follow it.'

"*May* 2, 1825.

"I returned last week on Wednesday, preached a preparatory lecture on Thursday, attended the church quarterly fast on Friday, prepared for the Sabbath on Saturday, and yesterday preached twice and administered the Lord's supper. The consequence is that I am only half alive this morning. L. and a young lady who boards with us were very much affected by the address to youth at the table. They wept all the last evening, and appeared very solemn this morning; but L. has so often been affected in a similar manner that I dare not promise myself much from present appearances. It is, however, evident that the Holy Spirit is constantly striving with her; she is never perfectly at ease; and I cannot but hope she will, ere long, become a subject of grace.

"In a religious view, things remain with us very much as they have been, though I think the church, or some of them at least, are becoming more alive than they were.—I have lately had some delightful meditations on the priesthood of Christ. I was led to them by thinking how a penitent Israelite must have regarded his high priest. We may consider such a man as saying—'I am a miserable, polluted sinner; I cannot enter the holy place where God dwells, but am kept at a distance. I cannot burn incense acceptably, cannot be permitted even to offer my own sacrifice. But I have a high priest, appointed and consecrated by God, who is permitted to approach him on my behalf. He carries my name, or the name of my tribe on his breast-plate. He offers sacrifice *for me;* he burns incense for me; he enters the holy place and sprinkles atoning blood for me. In him I am accepted, and in him will I glory Take away my high priest, and you take away my all; but while I have him, while he is accepted in my behalf, I will exult and rejoice.' And with how much more reason may the Christian triumph and glory in his great High Priest, and rejoice that he is 'accepted in the Beloved.' I do not mention these thoughts as any thing new, but as thoughts which have been peculiarly sweet and precious to me of late. Yet, alas! I am continually seeking to be my own high priest, to find something in myself for the sake of which I may be accepted, at least in part. How happy are you, my dear mother, to have gotten almost through this wearisome, terrible conflict! Your trials and sufferings are almost ended, and the blessed fruit of them is all to come.'

These extracts furnish specimens of his zeal, and his various methods of exerting himself for the promotion of religion. His labors were never suspended, unless physical debility rendered the prosecution of them impossible. His religion was not intermittent. With him time was a precious talent, and he "paid no moment but in purchase of its worth." He would not willingly suffer an hour to pass away without some effort for the recovery of lost sinners. Whatever were the declension of those around him, his ardor in religion and his exertions for its advancement suffered no visible abatement. On the contrary, the darkest times were those in which he was eminently "jealous for the Lord of hosts," a living witness to the power of divine grace, and a living reproof to such as 'had gone away backward." When he saw his fellow-men indifferent to their own salvation—when he saw "reigning crime and hastening death"—it was "a spectacle which made" his heart ache and "his eyes weep." He expostulated, he warned, he entreated, he mourned in secret places, he "ran between the dead and the living," and earnestly interceded with God to interpose for their salvation. He could "not hold his peace, nor take rest," when Zion was in affliction, and "none coming to the solemn feast." As it respects the progress of the Redeemer's cause, he seemed always to glow with the spirit and feelings which most are accustomed to regard as a privilege peculiar to a time of general revival. These feelings must have been subject to some inequalities even in him; but they seem never to have sunk to a point which was not above the standard of attainment with ordinary men in their most favored seasons. He was, indeed, often discouraged with respect to himself and his own personal prospects; but, if he ever suffered any declension in zeal for the glory of God in the salvation of others, it was of such temporary duration as to produce no perceptible effect on his use of means. If there was a time, during his whole ministry, when he was not ardently desirous, and, to the extent of his ability, actively laborious for the conversion of sinners, the fact was not observable by his people, nor even by his most intimate friends.

He loved his work: when not exhausted by fatigue, or depressed by illness, he was specially fond of the exercise of preaching—so much so, that he considered it no favor for a way-faring brother to offer to supply his place gratuitously on a Sabbath. He felt, to use his own comparison, about as much obligation for such an offer, as he should to a man for proposing to eat up a good dinner prepared for himself when he was half-starved. In preparing for the pulpit, it was his invariable object to introduce so much of the grand truths of the Gospel into every discourse, that a person who had never heard a sermon before, and should never hear another, might learn from it what was essential to salvation. While his sermons generally bore this uniform feature, they were endlessly various in other respects. He seldom selected a text without reference to the known circumstances of his church and congregation; and so wakeful and diligent was he "to know the state of his flock," that he scarcely ever failed in the adaptation of his subject. So dexterously did he wield the sword of the Spirit, and so fully and accurately discern and expose ' the thoughts and intents of the heart," that, to this day, there are those who believe that their particular sins had been reported to him, and that his discourses were adapted to their own individual case.

But, among all his services in the house of God, none, perhaps, were more signally blessed than his exercises at the communion-table. Uniformly, this ordinance was, in a high degree, refreshing to his own spirit. Hither he delighted to come and quench his thirst for the water of life. Here he met the Savior, "who bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and who, "having himself suffered, being tempted, knoweth how to succor them that are tempted." To him the crucified Son of God had incomparable attractions. He saw in Christ that kind, sympathizing all-powerful High Priest who was suited to the wants of which he felt so deeply conscious. And he always came to this sacred feast with a soul full of tenderness, and dwelt on the love of a suffering Savior with a pathos that was irresistible. Here, in an unrivalled degree, his "heart indited good matter, and his tongue was the pen of a ready writer." "Jesus Christ was, indeed, set forth crucified before the eyes" of the admiring communicants. His person, attributes, and offices, as the Redeemer of our lost race; his marvellous compassion in dying to atone for our sins; his intercession at the right hand of the Father; the glories and terrors of his second coming—were so distinctly and affectingly exhibited, as to excite the corresponding emotions in all hearts which were not harder than the nether millstone. Those who could sympathize with the administrator, while contemplating Christ as Mediator, by whom we have access to God, and redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace," felt that in sinning against Christ they had wounded their best, tenderest, almighty Friend. And O how hateful was sin made to appear! how loathsome! how heartily was it renounced! how fervently its future commission deprecated! and then the renewed and unreserved dedication of soul and body to God, as a living, holy, acceptable, and reasonable sacrifice! "How sweet and awful was the place," while sealing their vows, and Christ his pardons, with the consecrated symbols of his body and blood! How precious was the communion of saints with Jesus, and with one another!—To hundreds have these sacred scenes been earnests of the heavenly inheritance. And the interest which he gave to the occasion by his spirituality, his knowledge of the heart, of the Savior, and of the mysteries of redemption, exhibited in his appropriate and impressive appeals, usually detained a great number who were not communicants; and what they heard and witnessed was not unfrequently the means of conviction.

This, too, was his chosen occasion to impress on the young a sense of their obligations to devote themselves to their God and Redeemer; and a more suitable one could not have been selected. There are many who will remember it with everlasting gratitude. When it is recollected how much there is in this scene to render instructions impressive on the minds of youth, might not ministers generally take a valuable hint from his practice?

The church fasts and conferences, when conducted by the pastor, were, next to those of the communion, the most humble, melting, edifying, and instructive seasons which his highly favored flock enjoyed. Here he employed his faith, his imagination, and the various resources of his richly furnished mind to show them their actual condition, and urge them forward in their Christian course. So distinctly and clearly could he illustrate the different degrees of Christian attainment, and mark the different shades and varieties of religious experience in all its gradations, from the babe to the perfect man in Christ Jesus, that it would seem every Christian present must have known his precise rank. A specimen of his manner, as near as can be recollected, may be thus stated:

"Suppose professors of religion to be ranged in different concentric circles around Christ, as their common centre. Some value the presence of their Savior so highly, that they cannot bear to be at any remove from him. Even their work they will bring up, and do it in the light of his countenance; and, while engaged in it, will be seen constantly raising their eyes to him, as if fearful of losing one beam of his light. Others, who, to be sure, would not be content to live out of his presence, are yet less wholly absorbed by it than these, and may be seen a little farther off, engaged here and there in their various callings, their eyes generally upon their work, but often looking up for the light which they love. A third class, beyond these, but yet within the life-giving rays, includes a doubtful multitude, many of whom are so much engaged in their worldly schemes, that they may be seen standing sideways to Christ, looking mostly the other way, and only now and then turning their faces towards the light. And yet farther out, amongst the last scattered rays, so distant that it is often doubtful whether they come at all within their influence, is a mixed assemblage of busy ones, some with their backs wholly turned upon the sun, and most of them so careful and troubled about their many things as to spare but little time for their Savior.

"The reason why the men of the world think so little of Christ, is, they do not look at him. Their backs being turned to the sun, they can see only their own shadows; and are, therefore, wholly taken up with themselves. While the true disciple, looking only upward, sees nothing but his Savior, and learns to forget himself."

"The growth of grace in the heart may be compared to the process of polishing metals. First, you have a dark, opaque substance, neither possessing nor reflecting light. Presently, as the polisher plies his work, you will see here and there a spark darting out; then a strong light; till, by and by, it sends back a perfect image of the sun which shines upon it. So the work of grace, if begun in our hearts, must be gradually and continually going on; and it will not be completed till the image of God can be seen perfectly reflected in us."

At a church fast, in the time of a revival, he mentioned, as dangers to be guarded against, and as causes of the suspension of divine influences,

1. "Christians, in times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, are apt to be so much taken up in conversing and laboring with sinners, that, from concern for the souls of others, they neglect their own spiritual interests. This may do very well for a time, but in the end will be productive of much evil. I do not mean to dissuade you from laboring for the good of others, but to warn you to take care of your own souls.

2. "Christians are in danger, when a revival has continued for some time, of praying less for its continuance, and of being less thankful for it. They seem to take it for granted that it will go on as a matter of course; their prayers grow less frequent and fervent, and their gratitude less lively, until at length a case of conversion, which would at first have electrified the whole church, produces scarcely any sensation at all. Now, when this is the case, a revival will certainly cease; for God never continues to bestow spiritual favors where they are not felt to be such.

3. "Another reason why revivals do not continue longer, is, that there is so much animal excitement mixed with them. It is a law of our nature, that the duration of merely animal feelings should be in inverse proportion to their strength. These are no part of spi-

rituality and holiness; for the more holy we are, the less we shall have of them. Our Savior had none of these feelings. Strive to repress animal feeling, and to be more purely spiritual."

"We read that Nadab and Abihu, on the day of their consecration to the priesthood, instead of taking holy fire with which to burn incense, took strange, that is, common fire, and were punished by immediate death for their presumption. To us this may appear a slight offence. We may think one fire equally good with another. But our God is a jealous God, and we must make our offerings in *the manner* he has commanded, and with a right spirit, or they will be an offence in his sight, and he will not accept them."

Mr. Payson was never more happy than when guiding inquirers to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." Some of the "similitudes" by which he endeavored to illustrate the nature of experimental religion, and assist inquirers in judging of the character of their own exercises, have been preserved in the memory of several of his later converts, and will not be unwelcome to any class of readers. They do not profess to be reported in precisely his language, and on this account due allowance must be made. Much of their original force and appositeness is doubtless lost.

"Suppose a number of persons standing by a river's side. They are invited to drink of its waters, but they are not thirsty, and therefore do not desire them. At length their thirst is excited, and they look round for a vessel with which to take up some water. But their vessels are all filled with some worthless thing, which they are as yet unwilling to part with. But, as their thirst increases, they become willing to relinquish what they had thought of so much value, and finally emptying their vessels of this rubbish, and receiving the water, they quench their thirst. Thus it is with sinners: Jesus Christ invites them to come to him, the Fountain of living waters. But they decline his invitations—their hearts being filled with the treasures of earth. They do not thirst for Christ till God takes away the love of this world and its vanities, and the Holy Spirit fills them with desire to come to him. Then they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and are prepared to receive Christ."

"Were a man suddenly precipitated into the sea, and, after making ineffectual struggles to save himself, to give up all for lost—should he at this crisis perceive a boat approaching, and a friendly hand extended for his rescue, he would, at first, scarcely credit his senses, or realize that he was safe; his joy would be so great, and his gratitude to his preserver so ardent. But after the first transports had subsided he would feel more real pleasure in contemplating the vessel, in admiring the wisdom apparent in its construction, and its admirable adaptedness for saving from death all who were in his late situation, than he would when he viewed it merely as the means of saving his own life. So the sinner, when first he finds himself rescued from destruction, is full of love to Christ for his peculiar and unmerited mercy to himself. But as he increases in knowledge and Christian attainments, has clearer views of the character of God and the wisdom and grace which appear in the plan of redemption, his love has less and less of selfishness."

"Suppose two persons equally desirous to gain your affections—one far distant, and not expecting to see you for a long time; the other always present with you, and at liberty to use all means to win your love, able to flatter and gratify you in a thousand ways. Still you prefer the absent one; and that you may keep him in remembrance, you often retire by yourself to think of his love to you, and view again and again the mementos of his affection, to read his letters, and pour out your heart in return. Such is now your case; the world is always before you, to flatter, promise, and please. But if you really prefer to love God, you will fix your thoughts on him, often retire for meditation and prayer, and recount the pleasant gifts of his providence, and especially his infinite mercy to your soul; you will read frequently his holy word, which is the letter he has sent you as really as if it were directed to you by name."

"Religion is the golden chain which God lets down from heaven, with a link for every person in this room inviting each to take hold, that you may be drawn by it to himself. You can readily perceive how disagreeable it would be to be linked to one whom you disliked, and drawn by him whithersoever he wills; but you would gladly be drawn and guided in every thing by the person whom you ardently loved. There is this difference between the Christian and the sinner. However reluctant and full of hatred, still the sinner is controlled by God; the Christian is equally in his hands, but is drawn by the cords of love."

"It has been frequently wished by Christians, that there were some rule laid down in the Bible, fixing the proportion of their property which they ought to contribute to religious uses. This is as if a child should go to his father and say, 'Father, how many times in the day must I come to you with some testimonial of my love? how often will it be necessary to show my affection for you?'—The father would of course reply, 'Just as often as your feelings prompt you, my child, and no oftener.' Just so Christ says to his people: 'Look at me, and see what I have done and suffered for you, and then give me just what you think I deserve. I do not wish any thing forced.'"

"Once I dreamed of being transported to heaven, and being surprised to find myself so calm and tranquil in the midst of my happiness, inquired the cause. The reply was—When you were on earth, you resembled a bottle but partly filled with water, which was agitated by the least motion; now you are like the same bottle filled to the brim, which cannot be disturbed."

"Christ said to Mary, Fear not; I know that you seek Jesus. If ye really seek Jesus, he says the same to you. Fear not—death, sorrow, sickness, any thing. If they are thus blessed who seek Jesus, what must those be who have found him?"

To an inquirer who complained that the difficulties in his way increased rather than diminished, he said, "You might bind a bird with a soft silken cord, and while he remains still he will not be sensible of his confinement; but as soon as he attempts to fly he will feel the cord that confines him; and the greater his desire and his efforts to escape, the more sensible will he be of his bondage. So the sinner may long be a slave to his sins, and never be aware of it till he rises to go to Christ."

"Every person has some object which he loves supremely; and in every unrenewed man that object is self. Suppose, for illustration, that you have an image which is in reality extremely ugly, but which you think beautiful, and you spend all your time in polishing and adorning it. At length, however, you begin to see something of its deformity, but endeavor to conceal it from others, and if possible from yourself, by painting and dressing it. Notwithstanding all your efforts, it grows more and more ugly, till at last, in despair of amending it yourself, you pray that God would make it more lovely. It is evident in this case that your prayers would not proceed from love to God, but from love to your idol; and therefore there would be no goodness in them. Suppose that during all this time a person was entreating you to look at a beautiful diamond statue, which you refused to do; until, wearied with useless efforts to make your image appear more beautiful, you turn and look at the statue. Immediately you see your idol in all its native deformity; you cast it aside, and begin to admire and extol the statue. This idol represents self, and every unrenewed person admires and loves it supremely. When his conscience is awakened to see something of his sinfulness, he first endeavors to make himself better; and it is long before he finds that he cannot change his own heart. When he finds that notwithstanding all his endeavors his heart seems to grow worse and worse, he prays to God for help. It is not from love to God, or because God has commanded it, that he prays; but because he is unwilling to see himself so sinful; so that his prayers arise merely from pride and selfishness. But if he will only turn and look to Christ, he sees his sins in a new light, and no longer loves himself supremely; all his affections are transferred to Christ. He then prays to be made better, not to gratify his pride, but because he sees something of the beauty of holiness, and longs to resemble his divine Master."

"Suppose one man owes another a thousand pounds, but he is unable to pay the debt, and denies that he owes it. His creditor being a very compassionate man, says to him, 'I do not wish for your money, and as soon as you will own the debt to be a just one, I will release you from your obligation; but I cannot do it before, for that would be in fact acknowledging that I am in the wrong.' The poor man refuses to confess that he owes the money, and is in consequence sent to prison. After remaining there for a time, he sends his creditor word that he will allow that he owes him a *hundred pounds.* But that will not do. After another interval he says he will allow that he owes *two* hundred pounds; and thus he keeps gradually giving up a little more, until he gets to nine hundred; there he stops a long while. At length finding there is no other way of escape, he acknowledges the whole debt, and is released. Still it would be free, unmerited kindness in the creditor, and the poor man would have no right to say, 'I partly deserved it, because I owned the debt;' for he ought to have done that whether he was liberated or not. Just in this manner we have treated God. When he comes and charges us with having broken his law, we deny it; we will allow perhaps that we deserve a slight punishment, but not all which God has threatened. But if we are ever to be saved, God comes and as it were shuts us up in prison; that is, he awakens our consciences and sends his

Spirit to convince us of sin. Thus we every day see more and more of the desperate wickedness of our hearts, until we are ready to allow that we have deserved eternal condemnation. As soon as we acknowledge this, God is ready to pardon us; but it is evident that we do not deserve pardon, that he is not under the least obligation to bestow it, and that all who are saved, are saved through free, unmerited grace."

"One excuse which awakened sinners are accustomed to alledge in their own defence is, that they wish to love God and to have new hearts, but cannot. They do indeed wish to be saved, but they are not willing to be saved in God's way; that is, they are not willing to accept salvation as a free gift. They would do any thing to *buy* it, but will not take it without money and without price. Suppose that you were very sick, and were told by the physician that there was but one medicine in the world which could save your life, and that this was exceedingly precious. You were also told that there was but one person in the world who had any of this in his possession; and that, although he was willing to *give* it to those who asked, he would on no account sell any. Suppose this person to be one whom you had treated with great neglect and contempt, injured in every possible way. How exceedingly unwilling would you be to send to him for the medicine as a gift! You would rather purchase it at the expense of your whole fortune. You would defer sending as long as possible, and when you found that you were daily growing worse, and nothing else could save you, you would be obliged, however reluctantly, to send and ask for some. Just so unwilling are sin ners to apply to God for salvation as a free gift; and they will not do it until they find themselves perishing, and that there is no other hope for them."

"The young convert, in judging of the reality of his conversion, generally lays much stress upon having a great deal of joy; and regards that as a very decisive proof that he is a disciple of Christ. But this is one of the most fallacious proofs, and no dependence ought to be placed on it. It is not desirable at first to have full assurance of our salvation, for our love is then weak; and some degree of fear is likewise necessary to keep us near to Christ."

"Suppose a child accidentally falls into a pit, and when some person comes to help him out, instead of thankfully accepting the offer, he says, 'No; I will not have you to help me out; I wish some one else to assist me.' He is told by his father that he shall not be assisted by any other person. Yet he still prefers remaining in the pit to accepting that person's offer. Does it not indicate strong aversion to him? Yet it is precisely thus that the sinner treats Christ. He is exposed to danger, from which none but Christ can deliver him. Yet rather than accept his assistance, he tries every other method again and again; and when he finds all his efforts unsuccessful, he practically says, 'I had rather perish than be saved by Christ.' How justly might the Savior take him at his word, and leave him to perish!"

"The manner in which people obtain a false hope is generally this: they first believe that God is reconciled to them, and then are reconciled to him on that account; but if they thought that God was still displeased with, and determined to punish them, they would find their enmity to him revive. On the contrary, the Christian is reconciled because he sees the holiness of the law which he has broken, and God's justice in punishing him; he takes part with God against himself, cordially submits to him, and this when he expects condemnation. *He* is reconciled, because he is pleased with the character of God; the *false convert*, because he hopes God is pleased with him."

"It is morally impossible for God to pardon sinners without repentance. The moment he should do it, he would cease to be a perfectly holy being; of course all the songs of heaven would stop, and all the happiness of the universe be dried up. In his conduct he is governed by a regard to the good of *the whole.* If a sovereign, out of false pity to criminals, should pardon them indiscriminately, he would thus destroy the happiness of all his faithful subjects, and introduce misery and confusion into his kingdom. But infinitely worse consequences would ensue, if God should neglect to punish those who transgress his law. His vast dominions would become one universal scene of anarchy and confusion; happiness would be banished for ever; and misery, in its most aggravated forms, would prevail throughout the universe. Yet all this the sinner would think ought to be endured, rather than that he should be obliged to repent of his sins."

"Young converts generally suppose that it is their strong faith which enables them to go to God and ask to be forgiven, without much fear or hesitation; but faith has less to do with it than they imagine. It is because they see little of their own sinfulness and God's hatred of sin. If they had clear views of these truths, they would find their weak faith very insufficient to induce them to go to Christ. Suppose a man, who had never seen fire, and who knew its effects only by report, should be told that at a certain distant period he would be obliged to pass through a fire. He is told also that there is but one kind of garment that can protect him from its influence. A person gives him this robe, and although it appears to him very thin and flimsy, yet he feels very well satisfied with it before he has seen the fire. But when the destined time arrives, and he sees the fire blazing out and consuming every thing within its reach, his confidence fails. At first, a small degree of faith enables the Christian to go to God; but as he advances in the knowledge of his own heart and God's hatred of sin, his faith must also be increased, to enable him to approach his heavenly Father with confidence."

" The young convert may be compared to a child whom his father is leading over a rugged and uneven path. After proceeding for some time without much difficulty, he forgets that it has been owing to his father's assistance—begins to think that he may now venture to walk by himself, and consequently falls. Humbled and dejected, he then feels his own weakness, and clings to his father for support. Soon, however, elated with his progress, he again forgets the kind hand which sustains him, fancies he needs no more assistance, and again falls. This process is repeated a thousand times in the course of the Christian's experience, till he learns, at length, that his own strength is perfect weakness, and that he must depend solely on his heavenly Father."

" To assist you in estimating the criminality of sin suppose that you had committed the first sin—that before you were born, such a thing had never been heard or thought of, but that all beings had united in loving and serving God, till all at once you started up and began to disobey his commands. What a commotion would be excited! Instantly the news would spread through heaven and earth with inconceivable rapidity, and all ranks and orders of beings would join in exclaiming, 'It cannot be! Where is the wretch who would dare to disobey Jehovah?' Suppose, then, that you were obliged to come forward and stand in the view of the assembled universe of myriads of sinless beings, who all regarded you with feelings of astonishment, horror, detestation, too strong for utterance How inexpressibly dreadful would sin appear in this point of view! And yet it is in reality just as dreadful and as criminal to sin now, as if no sin had ever been committed by another."

"The difference between true and false religion may be thus illustrated. Suppose a king visits two families of his subjects. The members of one think it great condescension in him to visit them; they show him every possible mark of affection and respect, and they are filled with regret and unhappiness at his departure. The other family have no real love for him; and though self-interest prompts them to show him every external mark of respect, yet it is constrained and they are glad when he departs. Now, if this king could read the heart, and saw that their services were insincere, he could not of course be pleased; and the more assiduous they were in their attentions, if prompted wholly by self-interest, the more would he be disgusted. In the same manner, when God, by his

Spirit, visits the true Christian, it fills him with joy and gladness; his presence is life; and when he hides his face, nothing can afford pleasure or satisfaction. But when thoughts of God enter the mind of the sinner, he feels uneasy, and tries to get rid of them. He may, from selfish motives, affect to seek God; but his heart is not in it, and he longs after the pleasures of the world. This is the way in which all awakened, yet impenitent sinners, seek God; and yet they are displeased because he will not accept such heartless services."

"We are apt to feel as if, by our prayers, we laid God under obligation to save us; as if our feeble, imperfect services were 'profitable to him.' Suppose a poor beggar should say of some rich nobleman, 'He is under great obligations to me, and when asked 'Why?' should answer, 'I have been every day, for a great many years, and told him a long story of my wants, and asked him to help me.' You can see how absurd this appears; and yet it is precisely similar to our conduct; except indeed that ours is much more absurd, because the disparity between God and us is infinitely greater than can exist between any two mortals."

"When sinners have been awakened to see their guilt and danger, and are invited to come to Christ and be saved, they frequently make such excuses as these—'I cannot believe that the invitations of the Gospel were intended for such sinners as I am; I am afraid I do not feel right, and that Christ will not receive me.' Suppose a table set in the street, and loaded with all kinds of food; and that a herald is sent to make proclamation that all who wish may come and partake freely. A poor man comes, and stands looking very wishfully at the table; and, when he is asked why he does not eat, replies—O, I am afraid the invitation is not meant for me; I am not fit." Again he is assured that the invitation is intended for all those who are hungry, and that no other qualification is necessary. Still he objects—'But I am afraid I am not hungry enough.' In the same way do sinners deprive themselves, by their own folly, of those blessings which are freely offered them by their Creator."

"Suppose the rebellious subjects of a very wise and good king condemned to death. The king has a son, who, from compassion to these poor wretches, offers to make satisfaction to his father for their crimes, if he will pardon them. The king consents on one condition. He places his son at the door of his palace, and makes proclamation, that every one who comes to him for pardon, and is led in by his son, shall be forgiven for his sake. One of the culprits comes, and, rejecting the proffered hand of the prince, rushes to the throne himself. Can this man expect mercy? Thus God has provided a Mediator, and commanded all to approach in his name; and none can expect to be received who do not come to God in this appointed way."

"One mark of a true convert is, that he continues to repent of his sins after he hopes that they are pardoned. All that the hypocrite desires is salvation from punishment; and when he thinks this end secured he feels no concern respecting his sins. But the true Christian desires to be saved from sin; and his hatred of sin, and repentance for it, increase in proportion as his assurance of heaven increases. Another mark is, that all disposition to make excuses is taken away. The repentant sinner feels willing to lie at God's feet and confess his sins, without even wishing to excuse them."

"It evinces more depravity not to repent of a sin, than it does to commit it at first. A good man may be hurried away by temptation to commit a sin, but he will invariably repent of it afterwards. To deny, as Peter did, is bad; but not to weep bitterly, as he did, when we have denied, is worse."

"We may have the form of godliness without the power; but it is impossible to have the power without the form."

"The promises in the Bible to prayer are not made to one act, but to the continued habit of prayer."

CHAPTER XV.

The same subject—Bible class—Pastoral visits—Social parties—Special and casual interviews—Charm of his conversation—Singular rencounter—Whence his competency—His publications.

If there is a spectacle on earth peculiarly animating to the thoughtful Christian who waits and prays for the salvation of God, it is the faithful, affectionate pastor, with the Bible in his hand, surrounded by the children and youth of his congregation, and leading them into "green pastures, and beside the still waters." It cannot be witnessed without a thrill of unusual delight and anticipations of the most cheering character. There may be more of immediate personal enjoyment in the communion of saints, and in that foretaste of an eternal feast which is granted to the redeemed of the Lord, when, gathered around the sacramental board, they glory in the cross, and celebrate the love of Him who died on it, and their faith anticipates the hour when they "shall see Him as he is," and come to the heavenly Zion and commence their everlasting song. But the same principle which causes "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance," is eminently a principle of benevolence, which is gratified with every prospect of increase to the "great multitude whom no man can number;" and it is called into action, and operates with no ordinary effect, in view of a collection of youth grouped around their beloved spiritual teacher, engaged in investigating the truths of the Bible and ascertaining the duties which it enjoins. It is a sight full of hope and promise. It is not presumption to expect from it the choicest spiritual fruits which a minister is ever permitted to reap. It is among this class of his charge that he may eminently "sow in hope." The promises of God authorize him to expect extensive and glorious results. It was upon the youth that Mr. Payson expended some of his best exertions; and these labors brought him a "harvest of golden sheaves."

His heart was drawn towards the rising generation, and meditated various expedients for advancing their welfare. He does indeed record and lament, among his deficiencies, the neglect of special efforts for their instruction and salvation. But, compared with what had been the ordinary standard of ministerial practice he abounded in works of this description. Though from the first he did not fail to give them appropriate instruction, yet it was not till the latter years of his ministry that the interesting group who periodically gathered around him took the designation of *Bible class;* and at that time his manner underwent a slight modification. The subjoined specimens were furnished by young persons to whom they were blessed:

" A way-faring man stops at a tavern, and, to beguile the time of his stay there, looks round for some book. He sees perhaps a newspaper, an almanac, and the Bible; but chooses to pore over either of the former in preference to the word of God, thinking it hard ly possible to be amused or interested in that. Even a Christian will sometimes do thus. This is as if a man should be introduced into an apartment, in one division of which were Jesus Christ and his apostles, and in the other the most dissolute and frivolous company; and, on being invited by the Savior to sit with them and enjoy their company, should refuse, and seat himself with the others. Would not this be a most gross insult to the Savior? and do you not equally undervalue and refuse his company when you thus neglect and despise his holy word—through which he converses with you, and invites you near to himself—and choose some foolish production instead of it?"

" God holds out to you, as it were, a thread no stronger than a spider's web, and says—" Take hold of this thread; I will increase its strength day by day until it becomes the line of salvation to you. So it is with the little interest you feel in the Bible class. If you cherish this, if you reflect upon what you read and hear, and daily pray to be made wise by these instructions, God will increase your interest to its consummation, till you become perfect ones in Christ Jesus. But if you lose your hold on this thread, you are lost."

The following paragraph illustrates his manner of stating the argument, and its application—the subject before the class being the evidence from the light of nature that there is a God:

" Suppose, my young friends, that, in traveling through a wilderness, a spacious garden should burst upon your view, in the midst of which is a splendid palace. Upon entering it you perceive, in every apartment, proofs of the agency of some living person, though you see no one. Complicated machinery is moving, and various operations are carried on; but still the agent who produces these effects is invisible. Would you be the less convinced that they were produced by some intelligent agent? And if you should be told that the palace came there by chance, and that all the movements you witnessed were caused by no power whatever, you would regard him who should tell you thus, either as a fool or a liar. Now, you have the same proof of the existence of God in his works, that you would have in the case I have supposed, of the existence and presence of some invisible agent; and it is just as unreasonable to doubt of his existence, as it would be to doubt whether the palace had been built by any person, or was only the work of chance. Suppose you were informed, by a writing on the wall, that the palace was inhabited or haunted by spirits who were constantly watching your conduct, and who had power to punish you, if it displeased them; and that you were also informed at the same time of the course of conduct which it would be necessary to pursue in order to obtain their approbation. How careful would you be to observe the rules, and how fearful of displeasing these powerful spirits! And if you were further informed that these were the spirits of your deceased parents, and that they were able to hear, if you addressed them—how delightful it would be to go and tell them of your wants and sorrows, and feel sure that they listened to you with sympathy and compassion!—I tell you, my young friends, this world is haunted, if I may so express it—haunted by the Eternal Spirit. He has given you rules by which to regulate your conduct, and is able to punish every deviation from them. And can you recollect that such a Being is constantly noticing your conduct, and still persist in disobeying his commands? God is also your Heavenly Father; and why can you not go to him, as such, with the same confidence which you would exercise in an earthly parent?"

In explanation of the command to glorify God:—"It may seem strange and presumptuous to speak of such poor, sinful, worthless beings as we are, as glorifying, or as capable of glorifying God. But the perfect Christian may be compared to a perfect mirror, which, though dark and opaque of itself, being placed before the sun, reflects his whole image, and may be said to increase his glory, by increasing and scattering his light. In this view we may regard heaven, where God is perfectly glorified in his saints, as the firmament studded with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of mirrors, every one of them reflecting a perfect image of God, the Sun in the centre, and filling the universe with the blaze of his glory."

"Whenever you feel any thing within you, my dear young friends, urging you to attend to religion, it is the Spirit of God; and if you refuse to comply, you will grieve him away. Suppose God should let down from heaven a number of very fine cords, and if any person should take hold of one, it would continue to grow larger and stronger, till at length he is drawn by it into heaven. Great care would be necessary, especially at first, not to break it; for if once broken, it might never be renewed. How careful should we expect the person to be, to whom one of these cords was extended, not to break it, to avoid all violence, and follow wherever it led him! Just so anxiously ought you to cherish the good impressions which are produced on your minds by the Spirit of God; for if you once grieve him he may never return."

"Suppose a man builds a temple with one seat in it very high and much ornamented, and another very far below it. You ask him for whom those seats are designed, and he replies—'Why, the most elevated one is for me, and the one below it is for God.' Now, in this case you can all see the horrible absurdity and impiety of such conduct; and yet each of you who continues impenitent is doing this. You have given yourselves the first place in your affections; you have thought more of yourselves than of God, and have done more to please yourselves than to please God; in short, you have, in every thing, preferred yourselves before him."

"Suppose there was a book in which the whole of your life was recorded, each page of which contained the events of a day. At the beginning was written, 'This is the life of a rational, immortal, accountable creature, placed in this world to prepare for eternity.' Then commences a long catalogue of sins; every page is successively covered with blots. Besides all these, there are the sins of omission, or duties neglected, which swell to a still greater amount. There are more than fifty commands binding upon you every moment; such as, to repent, to believe, to love Christ, to watch, pray, &c. none of which you perform. Thus you commit, to say the least, fifty sins in a moment. Add to these the first mentioned class of transgressions, and O what an amount of guilt does the record of each day present! At the bottom of every page it is written—Did this person live to God to-day? No. Did he feel any gratitude for mercies? No. Did he obey any of God's commands? No. Did he perform any part of the work for which he was created? No."

One of his most acceptable methods of communicating instruction and exciting a religious interest, was by visits to the families of his parishioners; and, though he speaks of himself as living extempore, they will cheerfully give him credit for system in this branch of duty. It was a custom which he commenced almost simultaneously with his ministry, to give notice from the pulpit that the families in a particular district, or street, might expect him at a given time in the course of the following week, and to request, that, if consistent with their engagements, they would all be at home; he wished to see the family together. Accordingly, when he entered a house, he usually found all in readiness for his reception, and could proceed without the loss of a moment to deliver his message. The time he spent in a family did not usually exceed twenty or thirty minutes; but was completely filled up with religious conversation and prayer. He could say much in a short time, and never failed to "divide a portion to every member" capable of receiving it. His "often infirmities" compelled him to relinquish this practice, and, for some years before his death, to limit his visits principally to houses of affliction. But these, in a congregation comprising thousands of souls, were necessarily very numerous.

He did not decline occasional invitations to evening parties, as he had given his people to understand that he desired none to send for him who did not wish him to come as a minister of Christ. In this character, however, he was usually a welcome guest; for, though he was invariably serious and faithful, he was neither abrupt nor forbidding in his manner of bringing forward religious topics. The divine Model he had so diligently studied taught him how to avail himself of passing observations and occurrences to introduce and enforce man's obligation to attend to his highest interests. He always seized the right moment to bring forward and urge his Master's claims; and when he had obtained the ground, he was certain not to yield it—indeed, none could wish to dispossess him. The subject which he so naturally and easily introduced he would expatiate upon and illustrate, and long hold the listening company in fixed and solemn attention. Here were witnessed some of the most en apturing and powerful strains of his sacred eloquence. A visiting party whose conversation was conducted by him, had all the advantages of a religious meeting in the article of instruction, and fell scarcely short in solem nity. To him it was often as laborious as a public lecture, as it regards both preparation and the exercise of speaking. He usually commenced and closed the interview by prayer.

It is obvious how much such a manner of conducting social visits must tend to cultivate and cherish a religious spirit in society. Every one has observed that, as they are often conducted, a single visit supplies matter for a month's gossip and scandal—evils which infect not only the individuals who were present, but their families and associates. But social intercourse, conducted on Christian principles, precludes these and similar evils, besides effecting positive good. The party separate with salutary impressions upon their minds, and carry more or less of a holy savor into their respective families. Religion becomes the subject of domestic conversation, which is rendered more intelligent and profitable by the very means which too frequently operate as a disqualification for the duty. In truth, no finite mind can trace all the happy consequences which flow from the habit of associating religion with all the intercourse and occurrences of life.

That it was a leading object with him to introduce and extend this habit among his people, appears from almost every act of his official life. It accounts, in part, for his remarkable circumspection, and unfailing care to set an example, in his own person, of *doing all things to the glory of God.* It was not without reference to this, probably, that he dedicated his own private dwelling to God; or rather, that, when he did this, he called in some of his neighbors to participate in the solemnities; and it was not without its influence. He was called, in his turn, to officiate on similar occasions for them. A scene of this kind is still recollected with lively interest by the members of a numerous family. In his prayer he anticipated almos every possible circumstance in their future history with that reverent particularity in which he was, perhaps, unrivalled; and in such select, appropriate, and vivid expressions, as gave the very walls of the habitation a tongue that has not since ceased to speak. The thought that it is a consecrated house, is suited to check all tendencies to sinful levity. One of the events anticipated in the prayer has already taken place; and the children of the family, who now are all members of the visible church, could tell with what comforting and sustaining power it was brought home to their hearts while surrounding the triumphant death-bed of an invaluable mother.

From the most casual interview with him, the Christian could not separate without being instructed, humbled, and revived; nor the impenitent sinner without a topic for reflection—perhaps an arrow in his heart. He exemplified one of his own remarks—"Our unconverted friends should feel that our whole deportment, and even our very silence, declares that we earnestly seek their salvation."

A circumstance which gave to his company one of its most attractive charms, was his great condescension and affability, which entirely relieved the interlocutors of all embarrassment. No matter how awkwardly or defectively they expressed their difficulties, or proposed their queries—it was enough for him that he knew their meaning. He took no advantage of these defects, to mortify them and show off his own superiority; he never asked them to repeat and '*define* *precisely* what they wanted"—a chilling practice with some affectedly wise and accurate men, which must effectually silence the weak and illiterate, and cut off from them all hope of improvement: he took this labor upon himself. If he perceived them in danger of embarrassment, he would interpose and help them out. The most broken and imperfect expressions were sufficient to indicate to him the exact wants and feelings of the speaker. So truly was this the case, that his knowledge of others' thoughts would appear to a witness almost intuitive; and he was equally prompt to apply the appropriate counsel. It was from ignorance of his power of perception, in this respect, that some have spoken of his inquiry meetings, during the latter half of his ministry, as more properly entitled to the appellation of lectures, or meetings for exhortation. But his remarks were as really predicated on the known states of mind in the assembly, as they ever are in any inquiry meeting, however conducted. The truth is, besides watching the individual characters of his charge for years, he had so thoroughly studied the moral and spiritual nature of man, in connection with the Scriptures, that he could distinguish the symptoms which indicate the state of the heart, with as much readiness and certainty as the most skillful physician can those of bodily disease.

It was not to man in one attitude or situation only that he could adapt himself, but to men in all situations, and of every variety of rank and character, and every degree of intellectual culture. A bereaved husband in another town, to whom he was known only by report, but whose wife's obsequies he providentially attended, inquired, some time after the funeral, if

Mr. Payson had married a second wife—inferring, from his prayer, that he knew, experimentally, the feelings inseparable from a state of widowhood.

The following imperfectly described rencounter with a lawyer of Portland, who ranked high for wealth, and was very fluent withall, will serve to show Mr. Payson's insight into character, and his power to mould it to what form he pleased.

A lady, who was the common friend of Mrs. Payson and the lawyer's wife, was sojourning in the family of the latter. After the females of the respective families had interchanged several "calls," Mrs. —— was desirous of receiving a formal visit from Mrs. Payson; but to effect this Mr. Payson must also be invited; and how to prevail with her husband to tender an invitation was the great difficulty. He had been accustomed to associate experimental religion with meanness, and of course felt or affected great contempt for Mr. Payson, as if it were impossible for a man of his religion to be also a man of talents. He knew by report something of Mr. Payson's practice on such occasions, and dreading to have his house the scene of what appeared to him a gloomy interview, resisted his wife's proposal as long as he could and retain the character of a gentleman. When he gave his consent, it was with the positive determination that Mr. Payson should not converse on religion, nor ask a blessing over his food, nor offer a prayer in his house. He collected his forces and made his preparation in conformity with this purpose, and when the appointed day arrived, received his guests very pleasantly, and entered at once into animated conversation, determined, by obtruding his own favorite topics, to forestall the divine. It was not long before the latter discovered his object, and summoned together his powers to defeat it. He plied them with that skill and address for which he was remarkable; still, for some time victory inclined to neither side, or to both alternately. The lawyer not long before had returned from Washington city, where he had spent several weeks on business at the supreme court of the United States. Mr. Payson instituted some inquiries respecting sundry personages there, and among others, the chaplain of the house of representatives. The counselor had heard him perform the devotional services in that assembly. "How did you like him?" "Not at all; he appeared to have more regard to those around him than he did to his Maker." Mr. Payson was very happy to see him recognise the distinction between praying to God and praying to be heard of men, and let fall a series of weighty observations on prayer, passing into a strain of remark which, without taking the form, had all the effect on the lawyer's conscience of a personal application. From a topic so unwelcome he strove to divert the conversation, and every few minutes would start something as wide from it as the east is from the west. But, as often as he wandered, his guest would dexterously and without violence bring him back; and as often as he was brought back he would wander again. At length the trying moment which was to turn the scale arrived. The time for the evening repast had come; a servant had entered with the tea and its accompaniments; the master of the feast became unusually eloquent, resolved to engross the conversation, to hear no question or reply, to allow no interval for "grace," and to give no indication by the eye, the hand, or the lips, that he expected or wished for such a service. Just as the distribution was on the very point o commencing, Mr. Payson interposed the question—"What writer has said the devil invented the fashion of *carrying round* tea, to prevent a blessing being asked?" Our host felt himself "cornered;" but making a virtue of necessity, promptly replied—"I don't know what writer it is; but if you please, we will foil the devil this time: Will you ask a blessing, sir?' A blessing of course was asked, and he brooked as well as he could this first certain defeat, still resolved not to sustain another by the offering of thanks on closing the repast. But in this too he was disappointed. By some well-timed sentiment of his reverend guest he was brought into such a dilemma that he could not, without absolute rudeness, decline asking him to return thanks. And thus he contested every inch of his ground till the visit terminated. But at every stage the minister proved too much for the lawyer. He sustained his character as a minister of religion, and gained his point in every thing; and that too, with so admirable a tact, in a way so natural and unconstrained, and with such respectful deference to his host, that the latter could not be displeased, except with himself. Mr. Payson not only acknowledged God on the reception of food, but read the Scriptures and prayed before separating from the family—and did it, too, *at the request* of the master, though this request was made, in every successive instance, in violation of a fixed purpose. The chagrin of this disappointment however, eventually became the occasion of his greatest joy. His mind was never entirely at ease till he found peace in believing. Often did he revert with devout thankfulness to God, to the visit which had occasioned his mortification; and ever after regarded with more than common veneration and respect the servant of God whom he had once despised, and was glad to receive his ministrations in exchange for those on which he had formerly attended.

His knowledge was not, as many have supposed, limited chiefly to theology. He was familiar, beyond what is common, with the whole circle of the sciences—so much so, that eminent men of the different professions, who have incidentally met with him without knowing who he was, have, for the first half hour of their conversation, mistaken him for one of their own class. By physicians he has been thought a physician, and a lawyer by lawyers; and even the experienced senator has found him an invincible antagonist on ground which his profession merely would not require him to assume.

He never ceased to add to his stock of knowledge; and his intelligent manner of conversing, on any topic whatever, would excite less of wonder, if the amount of his reading were known. He was a subscriber for Rees's Cyclopedia, and read the numbers generally throughout as they successively issued from the press.

He has been reputed a great novel reader; but this report, as it would be naturally understood, misrepresents him. He expended little money or time on books of this class after having turned his attention to the ministry. He knew something of every fictitious work which was introduced into the place; but this knowledge was gained perhaps in an hour's time, in some retired corner of a book-store which was kept by one of his congregation. He had good reasons for knowing what kind of books circulated among his people, and especially if any of them were immoral in their tendency. If he read them on his own account, it was for mere relaxation, from which his vigorous and well-balanced mind derived strength and freshness for more solid pursuits.

His own views of a proper course of reading to be pursued by a Christian were once given extempore in conversation, from which it will be seen that novels have, at most, but a very dubious place:

"It may be proper, and perhaps advantageous, for a Christian to read sparingly works of taste. History he ought to read, and biography. Some knowledge of the philosophy of the mind is desirable, and may be obtained without very great expense of time. Church history, and a knowledge of ancient Eastern customs, will be very useful. Every kind of knowledge which expands, strengthens, and adorns the mind, may be properly sought by the Christian, and ought to be sought by every Christian who has leisure and opportunity for reading. Our aim in seeking it should be to qualify ourselves to serve and glorify God more effectually, and to increase our power of being useful to our fellow-creatures. It is an old remark, that 'knowledge is power.' To increase our knowledge, then, is to increase our power of doing good. Highly as I prize such writers as Fénelon Kempis, &c. I am convinced we may study them, not perhaps too much, but too exclusively. We may study them to the exclusion of other writers, whose works demand our attention; and we may be so intent upon watching our feelings, as to forget to watch our words and actions. As some are content with a religion which is all body, so others may aim at a religion which is all soul; but religion has a body as well as a soul. If some think it sufficient to cleanse the outside of the cup, others may be so much occupied in cleansing it within, as to forget that it has an outside. Both deserve attention."

The press, which is with some their principal means of usefulness, was very little employed by Mr. Payson. He cherished a very low estimate of his own qualities as a writer, and could rarely be persuaded to submit a production for publication. To a request from a maternal association in Boston for the copy of a sermon of a specified character, he replied—"It would gratify me exceedingly to comply with the request. There is no honor, no favor that God can bestow, which I should prize more highly than that of doing good with my pen—of leaving something behind me to speak for Christ when I am silent in dust. But this honor He, who distributes his gifts to every man as he will, does not see fit to grant me. My sermons will not bear perusal. I must resign the privilege of doing good with the pen to those who are more able." He certainly undervalued himself as a writer, or else the Christian public have widely erred in their estimation of the very few publications to which during his life time he consented. His discourse, "The Bible above all price," delivered before the Bible Society of Maine, in 1814, was the first which he suffered to go to the press; and the myriads of copies which have been put in circulation show in what manner it is appreciated. And yet, while correcting the press, he says of it—"It seemed so flat, I would have given any thing to recall it from the press."

The success of this sermon is a good comment on the secret history of its origin:

"*May* 2, 1814. Mond. Was so much exhausted that I could scarcely move. Made a few visits. Tried to write; but felt that I could as soon make a world as write a sermon for Thursday, without special divine assistance.

"*May* 3. Was employed all the forenoon in preparing a sermon to be preached before the Bible Society. Felt that I was utterly incapable of it, and that, if I was enabled to write one, the glory would not be mine. Prayed for assistance with a strong hope of obtaining it. Made a few visits.

"*May* 4. Was employed upon my sermon, and was favored with considerable assistance. Felt, I hope, some thankfulness. But all my prayers for assistance, as well as my thankfulness for it, are so mixed with selfishness that they are worse than nothing. In the afternoon attended the funeral of my oldest deacon. Wished to be suitably affected, and to see others so. Found a large concourse of people assembled; made a few observations to them, but was much straitened.

"*May* 5. Completed my sermon. Felt much dissatisfied with it. Prayed that it might be blessed to convey more to the minds of others than it did to my own. In the evening preached; a most oppressive air, and I spoke with difficulty. Concluded, from observations made after meeting, that the sermon might have done some good; if so, to God belongs all the glory, and to Him may I be enabled to ascribe it."

"*Portland, May* 24, 1814.

"Not long after you receive this, you may expect a letter in print; that is to say, a discourse, which I have been compelled, sadly against my will, to give into the hands of the printer. It is a discourse lately delivered before the Bible Society. Fifteen hundred copies were subscribed for, and a promise made that the profits should go to purchase Bibles. Finding that the profits would be sufficient to purchase at least one hundred and fifty Bibles, I could not in conscience refuse. So, as soon as it comes from the press, which will be in a very few days, you will probably receive one. Do, my dear parents, pray, pray earnestly for the poor orphan, that it may do good in the world. I have never been assisted to pray so much for any one sermon as this; and that encouraged me to let it see the light. If it never does any other good, it will be the means of giving the Bible to many who would otherwise remain without it."

A very excellent Thanksgiving Sermon was also given to the public in 1820, for a similar reason, viz. a promise, which was amply fulfilled, that it should be made to produce something for missionary purposes.

His "Address to Seamen"* was the next in order of his publications. The author shows that he knew his object, and the way in which he could best accomplish it. He was not writing an oration for the alumni of a college, nor an article for a Quarterly Review. nor a "pretty discourse" for a fashionable auditory but an address to seamen. He had enjoyed more than common advantages for studying the character of this class of his fellow-men, and understood their vocabulary almost as well as themselves—so well that an experienced sea-captain was able to detect, in the whole address, but a single nautical term whose application involved a misconception of its use. Its popularity, from the very first, has been unrivalled by any thing of its kind. Copies of it have been multiplied to an extent past computation. It has been translated into some of the languages of the old world, and pretty extensively circulated on the coasts of the Mediterranean, from the press at Malta. And, if report be true, some divines of the mother country have not thought it disgraceful to claim a parental relation to it. Still it was no labored production; it was happily conceived, but the author does not appear to have laid himself out to produce any thing very extraordinary. It was thrown off almost at a sitting, and at a time when he was "encompassed with infirmities," and heavily pressed by other labors. This is evident from his private record:

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* Tract No. 140.

" *Oct.* 22, 23, 1821. Very unwell these two days. Could do nothing, though I have four sermons to prepare this week. Was, for a moment, tempted to murmur; but the recollection of God's past kindness and faithfulness prevented me, and caused faith to revive.

Oct. 24. Was better to-day, and wrote almost the whole of an address to seamen, to be delivered Sabbath evening. Felt some degree of gratitude, and resolved never to refuse to improve any opportunity of doing good because I seemed not to have time for it.

" *Oct.* 25. Was furnished with a suitable text and sermon for this evening without much labor. How graciously and wisely does God deal with me! How much I ought to love and trust him! Tried to preach my sermon to myself. Went to the house of God in much such a frame as I should wish to go; but had no assistance in preaching, and got through with difficulty. But felt satisfied that it should be so, and was enabled to rejoice in the Lord."

His mother once told a friend that he said to her, "God deals with me just as men do with an unruly horse; they take off the fetters for just so long as they wish to use him, and then put them on again. I have gone to my Thursday evening lecture, feeling that I could not, and that I was such a sinner that I ought not to say a word; and expecting, after the introductory exercises, to rise, give this information, and dismiss the assembly: but, before the close of the second singing, a subject has opened to me, and filled my heart, so that all I had to do was to contract it within the limits of an hour."

"*Oct.* 26. Was assisted to-day in writing, and had a precious season in prayer.

"*Oct.* 27. Sick to-day—a violent head-ache, with some fever. Did not see how I could complete my preparation for to-morrow, but felt satisfied and easy. Saw it was best I should have some rebuff; took courage from it, and hope that God meant to bless my labors to-morrow. In the evening wrote considerable, notwithstanding my head-ache; and, after I retired was almost painfully happy, rejoicing in God with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

"*Oct.* 28. Sab. Some better this morning. Finished a sermon for the afternoon, on increasing in the knowledge of God. Was almost insupportably happy, and could hardly refrain from shouting aloud for joy. Was assisted in praying for others; yet had no assistance in public prayer or preaching. In the evening preached to seamen—an overflowing house; aisles and pulpit stairs full, and hundreds went away who could not get in. Was enabled to go through tolerably. As soon as I came down was beset so importunately for a copy for the press that I could not refuse."

Portland, Nov. 25, 1821.

"My Address to Seamen is published, and I shall send you one with this. They have printed nine thousand copies; three thousand in the sermon form, and six thousand in the form of a tract. They mean to send them to every sea-port in the United States. I know you will pray that a blessing may go with it. It produced a great effect upon seamen and others for a time; but I do not know that any have been really awakened by it. One hundred and forty sailors applied the next day for Bibles, most of whom paid for them. I could not but wonder to see God work by it. I had only ten days' notice, and during that time had to prepare and preach six sermons, besides the Address, and another sermon which I did not preach."

"*December* 26.

"If I do not feel thankful for any other favor which God gives me, I do feel some gratitude when he enables me to do any thing which gives pleasure to the heart of my mother. If you were dead, one half the gratification I feel when I publish any thing which is well received, would be gone. I should also lose one half of my hopes that any thing I publish will do good; for I build my hopes very much on your prayers for a blessing. I suppose you or H. sent me the Keene paper, which contains my Address. It has been published in two other papers, and in a Baptist Magazine at Boston: and I have just received a letter from Professor P.'s lady, at ——, in behalf of a number of ladies there, who wish to publish a large edition in the form of a tract. I have requested our church to pray that a blessing may go with it, and I doubt not you will continue to pray. If it does any good, it will be owing to prayer."

His other publication was a sermon, preached before the "Marine Bible Society of Boston," entitled "The Oracles of God,"—a much more labored production than either of his other published discourses; and yet, for some cause, it has been far less popular. Besides these, he furnished one or two manuscript sermons for the National Preacher, which appeared soon after his decease.

CHAPTER XVI.

His exertions without the bounds of his parish—Influence on his ministerial associates; in resuscitating and edifying other churches—Visits "The Springs"—Effect of his example, conversation, and prayers on other visiters—Excursions in behalf of charitable societies—Translation of ministers—He is invited to Boston and New-York.

It is not easy to estimate the usefulness of a man in public life, whose numerous relations bring him into contact with his fellow-men in a great variety of circumstances. A minister of the Gospel, especially at this day, is not an insulated individual, whose influence is limited by parochial bounds. His presence, counsel, example, prayers, give shape, tone, direction energy to public institutions for enlightening the human species, alleviating its sufferings, and extending the empire of holiness. It is, indeed, no slight honor to be permitted to feed and build up a single branch of the church of God. To see the number of believers multiplied, and converted sinners joining themselves to the people of God, as the fruit of his labors, is an adequate reward for the pastor's most arduous toils, and for all the solicitude with which his anxious bosom is afflicted. And yet the increase and edification of his own particular charge may be only a small part of the good which is to be traced, more or less directly, to his instrumentality. The many hundreds to whom Mr. Payson's labors were blessed in the place of his residence, and whom it was his happiness to welcome to the church under his special supervision, are only a part, and may be found a small part of the gems which will embellish his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. To ascertain the whole amount of his usefulness, we must know the nature and degree of his influence upon his fellow-laborers in the ministry —the effect of his occasional labors in different and distant parts of the country—his agency in raising the tone of piety in all the churches which could be reached by his influence, the results of his powerful pleadings in behalf of religious and charitable enterprises, of his counsel in ecclesiastical concerns, and as one of the guardians of the principal seminary of learning in Maine—all, in short, that flowed from his conscientious and ever-watchful regard, wherever he was, and with whomsoever he met, to the apostolical precept—"Consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works."

His presence in the ministerial association to which he belonged, though often prevented by the frequent recurrence of his agonizing "head-ache," and by duties at home which he could not dispense with, was highly valued by his brethren. He was a strong advocate for devoting the first part of the time occupied by such meetings to social prayer. Prayer was his own preparation for every duty; and he felt it to be equally important that it should be a *common* preparation for a social duty. When on a council for the ordination of a minister, he was always on the watch for some interval of time to be consecrated to united prayer, with particular reference to the occasion and its consequences. In ministers' meetings, whether the immediate object were mutual edification, or a solution were requested of cases of conscience, and other difficulties which often arise in the discharge of the sacred office, or trying cases of discipline were presented for advisement, he was always ready to speak in his turn and always spoke to the purpose. A topic seldom passed him without fresh elucidation. Any proposition which bore the least trace of a time-serving policy or mere worldly wisdom, he would instantly discountenance. The writer has known him to do this, at once and effectually, by a very few words of his own, pointed with one of Witherspoon's "Characteristics."

He occasionally performed services for other congregations, of most auspicious bearing on the cause of religion; services which thousands have regretted that his health and engagements would not permit him to repeat. The nature of the services alluded to will be seen by an extract:

"*Portland, Jan.* 7, 1814.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"Not long after your return I went to ——, a town about forty miles from this, on a week's missionary excursion. They are in a wretched state—have had no settled minister for seven years. The only minister they ever had, proved an intemperate man. He is still living in the place, and does all he can to prejudice the people against the Gospel and all who preach it. Before I proceed I must take a little shame to myself, that God's goodness may appear more conspicuous. I commenced my ride by going to G. to obtain Mr. H. to preach for me during my absence. The next morning it stormed violently; then I began to repent of my undertaking. However, I was ashamed to go back; so on I went in the storm. I was tolerably good-natured the first part of the day, but the storm and the road grew worse and worse. First it was all mire and clay, then nothing but hills and stones. I began to grow cross. Every bad jolt made me worse, till I felt as bad as Jonah did, and was ready to say with him—'I do well to be angry.' Being in this frame, I concluded, of course, that I should do no good, wished myself at home a thousand times, and more than half resolved that I would never have any thing to do with a missionary tour again. However, I arrived safe, and began my labors, and soon found that I was not laboring alone. I cannot go into particulars. Suffice it to say, that in no place, not even in Portland, have I ever seen so much of God's power displayed, in the same space of time, as during the six days I spent in ——. I preached six times, and made between forty and fifty family visits. Many were awakened—almost all were solemn. One old man of seventy, among the wealthiest in the place, who has always been against doing any thing towards the settlement of a minister, was very deeply impressed, and has promised to give three hundred dollars towards a fund. Two others will give three hundred more each. I was obliged to return home on account of church fast and communion; but they have sent for me to come up again, and next week, Providence permitting, I shall go. Thus was I shamed and confounded by God's goodness. But this is not all. I came home thoroughly drenched by the shower of divine influences which began to fall at ——, and soon found that the cloud had followed me and was beginning to pour itself down upon my people. Instead of a fast, we appointed a season of thanksgiving. A blessing seemed to follow it. I then invited the young men to come to my house on Sabbath evening for religious purposes. The church thought none would come. I expected twenty at most. The first evening, forty came; the second, sixty; and the third, seventy. This was last Sabbath. Six stopped, after the rest were dismissed, to converse more particularly respecting divine things. About thirty persons are known to be seriously inquiring, and there is every appearance that the work is spreading. Meanwhile I am so ashamed, so rejoiced, and so astonished to see what God is doing, that I can scarcely get an hour's sleep."

No account of his second visit has been preserved. The hopes, however, which had been excited by his first, were not disappointed. The change which then commenced, prevailed, and was permanent. In the following spring, a candidate who had completed his preparation for the ministry under Mr. Payson's instruction, visited the place, and during his first week "found ten persons who entertained a hope, and heard of others; and in sixteen families whom he visited, more or less were inquiring, and, in some instances, whole families. Religion was almost exclusively the topic of conversation, and all appeared solemn. The subscriptions to a fund for the support of a minister amounted to three or four thousand dollars." This young preacher soon became the minister of the place, where he still remains, a useful laborer in the vineyard of Christ. Such were the results of one short missionary excursion.

About three years later, by particular request, he spent a week in another town, where some religious attention had commenced. It was a season of great solemnity. At his suggestion the church assembled and renewed their covenant, whose bonds for a long time had been but little felt. Their pastor led the way by acknowledging his deficiencies, and then imploring forgiveness and strength for time to come, renewed his engagements to the Lord and to his people. His wife followed his example, and was succeeded by the members of the church. During this visit Mr. Payson preached thirteen sermons, besides attending the less public meetings and conversing with inquirers and the impenitent; and yet he was scarcely sensible of fatigue till he left the spot. He "was so happy that he thought he might have exerted himself till he expired, without knowing that he needed rest." Or five persons, the fruits of this revival, who were propounded to the church at one time, four were above seventy years of age.

A service not very dissimilar in kind he once performed for several churches in his own neighborhood, as one of a committee of the Cumberland conference, much to their acceptance, and, it is hoped, to their spiritual advantage.

During his public life Mr. Payson made several journeys to the springs at Ballston and Saratoga, for the recovery of his wasted health. The mixed characters collected together at this place of fashionable resort, found him the judicious and earnest advocate of his Master's cause. Here he was no less bent on the ruling purpose of his heart than when at home among his own favorite flock. A visiter from another state, who took lodgings in the same house with himself, and preserved some of his remarks and topics of discourse, testifies that it was Mr. Payson's usual practice, in the evening, to read the Scriptures at a stated hour, and offer prayer, which was attended by most of the family and boarders, and to spend a half hour after prayer in religious conversation with all who were disposed to remain. He always found many willing to hear, and the number continually increased. He observed to the visiter above alluded to, that the time spent at the springs would not appear so much like a blank if he should be permitted to do any thing for the cause of Christ. This privilege was granted him; for many left that boarding-house with deep religious impressions, produced through his instrumentality. One young man who had resolved on finding new lodgings, because there was "so much praying" where he was, became the subject of deep conviction the very evening he expressed such a determination. The gentleman on whose authority these facts are stated, observes of his prayers—"They contain a great deal of instruction as well as devotion. He has a happy faculty of making his prayers *preach.*" Yet, while his conversation and prayers were so impressive and so full of instruction to others, he mourns over his own dullness, as though "the waters had washed every idea out of his head, and every feeling out of his heart."

The events alluded to in the foregoing paragraph, occurred in 1815. Of the impression produced by a subsequent visit, some idea may be formed from the following letter addressed to the compiler:

——"On his way to Niagara, Dr. Payson called at my house, purposing to rest awhile and try the benefit of the waters. I had heard much of this excellent man, but never saw him till this time; and the impression he made on my mind at this first interview will not soon be forgotten. I was struck with the perfect simplicity and great dignity of his manners. His countenance was 'care-worn,' and he had the appearance of one sinking under the load of human infirmities, and sighing for rest.

* * * *

"Speaking of his trials on one occasion, he observed to me—'I have needed, all along, to be under the discipline of Heaven; for nothing else could have kept me humble, and saved me from perdition. I have ever been prone to depart from God, and have been kept only by a constant effort of his love. It seems to me, if God had not continually held the rod over me, and hedged up my way, I should have escaped from his hands, and been forever separated from his love.' I expected, in answer to my inquiries, to hear of the victories of his faith; but he spoke only of the wonderful power of God which had kept him, and of his love to one so unworthy and perverse. He spoke of his 'fierce temptations,' and how he had been delivered by the mere mercy of God, and wondered that God should concern himself about such a worm, and that he did not leave him to be torn and devoured by Satan. In all my conversations with him, I never heard him utter a word that bordered on boasting, or savored of pride; but he seemed to have a surprising sense of his own unworthiness, and of the amazing love of God in making himself known to him, and giving him a hope in his mercy.

"Among the virtues of his character, that of humility appeared eminently beautiful and lovely, and shone in his whole deportment. In prayer, his soul lay low before God. He frequently took part in family devotion, and here he excelled all the men I ever heard. He carried us up and placed us all in the divine presence; and when he spread forth his hands to God, heaven seemed to come down to earth, and the glory of the Lord shone around our tabernacle. He knew our wants, and he expressed them in language simple and affecting. He knew our miseries, and he told them all in such tones of tenderness and sympathy as made us feel that a friend was pleading our cause. While this holy man has talked with God, and seemed to be overshadowed with the divine glory, I have sometimes thought I could imagine what must have been the ecstacy of Peter when surrounded with the glories of the transfiguration scene. At these solemn seasons, when our brother has been pouring out his heart in deep complaints of sin, and in fervent petitions for mercy, it has seemed as though the cloud of the divine presence covered the household, and the divine Majesty was very near us.

"In the bosom of a private family Dr. Payson hoped to escape notice, and find rest from the vexations of company. But he could not be long concealed; his retreat was soon discovered, and visiters thronged to see him.

"Our domestic circle was often enlivened by the presence and the conversation of Dr. Payson. The children were not unnoticed by him, but shared largely in his attentions; and he seemed to take delight in sharing the toils of the nursery. Often would he take the child from the arms of its mother and carry it for hours together, and sing some little air to divert it. His conversations were, for the most part, of a religious cast, and the strains of the mourning prophet suited him best. Yet now and then would he dwell on the sublime and animating themes of religion; and when he began on an exalted strain, he was surpassingly eloquent and instructive. He would seize hold of some thought, and pursue it until it expanded and glowed under the splendor of his imagery. On one occasion he spoke of the probable condition of the soul of the believer when dying. At this awful period, when gasping in the agonies of death, and apparently insensible to every thing around him, he supposed the world to be wholly shut out; and in this condition, while friends stand around and tremble to think of the unknown agonies he may be enduring, he supposes the light of God's countenance is pouring in upon the soul, renering him insensible to all his pains, and the soul is struggling and panting to escape from the crumbling tenement, and be at rest in the bosom of God. I can only give you the idea; it is impossible to reach his description. He seemed to dwell in a spiritual world, and to be most conversant with spiritual objects. This he manifested 'by pureness, by knowledge, by love unfeigned.' He talked about death as we would talk about going from one place to another; and, if any might adopt the language of Watts, much more might he·

> 'Receive my clay, thou treasurer of death;
> I will no more demand my tongue
> Till the gross organ, well refined,
> Shall trace the boundless flights of an unfettered mind,
> And raise an equal song.'

"I add no more; only that the visit of Dr. Payson at my house left this impression upon our minds—*not to be forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained* ANGELS *unawares.* S. W. W.'

A short passage from a letter of condolence, addressed to Mrs. Payson by a friend in Connecticut, will probably express the common sentiment of the many thousands who have listened to him whether for a few moments only or for hours:

"I remember with most deep and interesting impression, my last interview with your beloved and ever to be lamented husband. It was during a delightful ride of five or six miles, on the borders of Farmington river. Never had I heard such discourse from the lips of man—never had such an interview with a mortal. Even then he seemed like a pure spirit from another world. Such words of wisdom! and such heavenly affections! I cannot efface the impression from my mind."

The compiler has taken much pains to procure from companions of his journey some of the striking observations which were drawn from him by the natural scenery that he witnessed, by the various characters with whom he met, and the circumstances in which, at different times, he found himself. But his attempts, even with those from whom he had the greatest reason to expect full and satisfactory replies, have been utterly fruitless. The general impression produced by his occasional conversation has been very strong and deep, and the effect powerful and abiding; but no one has ventured to report particulars. The words, and, of course, the precise sentiments, with numerous circumstances which rendered them peculiarly seasonable, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver," are lost beyond recovery, while their effect remains. The impulse which he gave to other minds still keeps them in action, and is still transmitted from mind to mind, while it is impossible for them to tell *how* this impulse was first imparted. The pleasure and the benefit remain, though the exciting cause has disappeared. So absorbed have persons been with the effect, as to lose all distinct recollection of the means employed in producing it. This corresponds with the writer's experience. At the first visit which he ever received from Dr. Payson, some allusion was made to the opinion which prevails among Christians in common life, that ministers are in a situation peculiarly favorable to religious enjoyment, because their profession leads them to be incessantly conversant with divine truth. "This," said Mr. Payson, "is just as if a hungry man, on entering the kitchen of a large victualling-house, and inhaling the savory odor of the various dishes of rich food, hot from the fire and the oven, with which the busy laborers were loading the tables, should exclaim, What a blessed time these *cooks* have!" During the interview he uttered enough to make a valuable pamphlet; and yet this one comparison is all that can be related with even tolerable justice to him.

He had repeated applications from the directors of the principal charitable societies of the country to take journeys and collect funds for their respective operations. Of the first of these applications he says—"I dislike begging, and therefore thought I must go; but the hopes of a revival pulled me back." He, however, soon after "made a beginning by visiting a few towns, the result of which did not encourage him to proceed. He was brought into circumstances which rendered it necessary to preach ten times in eight days;" which, added to the fatigue of riding a great distance, proved too much for his strength, and compelled him to relinquish the undertaking.

In the early part of 1819 he made a tour, confined chiefly to Essex county, Mass. in behalf of the American Education Society. His success in collecting money, though as great, probably, as his employers had any reason to anticipate, did not equal his own wishes. It was no slight trial, "after preaching till he was half dead, to find only a few dollars contributed, and then be obliged to retire, and lie awake, brooding over his ill success half the night." His actual receipts, however, constituted but a small part of the advantage which the society realized as the consequence of his excursion. By such an advocate its objects and its claims were favorably made known to the community; auxiliary societies were formed, and promises obtained from individuals of large donations. The amount of good which he accomplished on this journey cannot be estimated by dollars and cents. To obtain money was with him, now and at all times, a very subordinate object. It was his great desire to exert an influence favorable to the spiritual welfare of ministers and churches whom he visited. "I labored as directly as I dared, to persuade all the ministers where I went to expect a revival, and talked to them in my way about Christ." His unusual manner of conversing attracted attention, and opened to his brethren new ways of awakening interest in the subject of Christ and his salvation. His prayers produced the same impression which they always had on strangers. An aged minister noticed the same quality in his prayers, as did the lay visiter at the Springs. He remarked, after hearing them, that prayer might be made as instructive as preaching; and wrote to a son in the ministry to have Mr. Payson preach for him by all means, and especially to *pray*.

Mr. Payson's excursions from time to time, for the benefit of his health, were the means of making him personally known in several of our southern cities, as well as in New England and New-York, and consequently of extending that pious influence, which he ever exerted, to the farthest boundaries of our land.

There is nothing more true in theory, than that a minister is the common property of the church at large, rather than of any particular portion of it, and that she has a right to his services in that place which will afford the widest scope for the effectual and useful employment of his peculiar talents and qualifica tions. But various causes render the principle one of most difficult application. Some unhappy consequences, perhaps, never fail to follow the transfer of a minister from one church to another; and no slight probability of increased usefulness can justify such removal. In order that such a change may bring any gain to the church general, a minister must do much more good in his new situation than he did in that which he left; for it will require much to balance the certain evils inseparable from his removal. When a pastor is established in the affections and confidence of his flock, and is laboring with more than ordinary zeal and success, any interference from abroad must be regarded as a hazardous experiment. There may be much of selfishness in the refusal of a people to give up their minister; but certainly not more than there is in those who wish to obtain his services at their expense, and by whose solicitations their feelings are put to the trial. Else, why does the choice of rich churches never fall upon any but ministers of established popularity, or distinguished for their success; while many others, equal, perhaps superior, in moral and intellectual worth, are placed over churches by whom their merits are not appreciated, and who only need a change of situation to take a rank among the most useful of Christ's ministers? The "call" of a church to the pastor of a sister church may be the call of God, and it may be the result of caprice, of partiality, of pride, or other selfish passions. Those calls are most entitled to consideration, which these feelings have the least concern in producing. The guardians of our public seminaries may be supposed, from their situation, to have no private feelings or partialities to gratify by their appointments. In ordinary cases they can have little inducement to act for any other than the general good; and that will be a dark day for our land, when these institutions, the nurseries of learning and religion, whence her future pillars are to be obtained, shall be denied their claim to the most valuable men whom the church can furnish.

Much disquiet is often produced in a congregation by the reported intentions and informal proposals of other congregations to "get away their minister," even when this imprudent agitation of the subject does not issue in a formal invitation. The second church in Portland had much experience of this species of trial. When Park-street Church, in Boston, was left vacant by the removal of Dr. Griffin, Mr. Payson's charge had unpleasant apprehensions of losing their beloved pastor. It is in allusion to this time that he says in a letter—"We have been kept in a fever here all this winter, by perpetual alarms from Boston. Because I do not refuse before I am asked, and exclaim loudly against going, some of my people suspect I wish to go. . . . I wish 'Boston folks' would be content with being 'full of notions' themselves, and not fill other people's heads with them." It must greatly endear his memory to his surviving flock to learn from another letter what were his secret feelings in relation to this matter:—"My people—I never knew before how much they loved me. I am amazed to see what an interest God has given me in the affections of his people, and even of sinners. It would seem like tearing off limbs to leave them. Indeed I see not how it is possible, humanly speaking, to get away from them. I have not yet been put to the trial. No application has yet been made from B. though much has been said about it. It is very doubtful whether any will be made. I feel very easy about it myself, but the church are in great tribulation. Ever since it was first talked of, I have taken special care to avoid every thing which might tend, either directly or indirectly, to bring it about. If it comes, it shall be none of my seeking."

Several years after this he did, with the full consent of his people, take up a temporary residence in Boston, and during the few weeks which he spent there, preached to crowded assemblies, and not without apparent effect. Though the work which his friends there laid out for him was too much for his strength, he was wearied with solicitations and entreaties to visit and preach in the neighboring towns; so anxious were those who had once heard him to secure for their friends and neighbors a participation in the same privilege, and so confident were their hopes that he would be the instrument of awakening a general concern for the soul, wherever he should address to men the message with which he was intrusted.

In 1825, at the organization of the new church in Hanover-street, he was invited to take the pastoral charge of it. He referred the call to his own church, who decided unanimously that he ought not to accept it—a decision to which he cheerfully acceded.

In January, 1826, he received a unanimous call from the church in Cedar-street, (now in Duane-street,) New-York, to become their pastor. This call he promptly, fully, and unequivocally declined. The motives by which he was actuated may be seen from a letter to his mother, written a few days afterwards

"*Portland, Jan.* 25, 1826.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"Before you receive this, you will probably have heard that I have returned a negative answer to the invitation from the Cedar-street church. After refusing to accept the call from Boston, I could not do otherwise. If I had gone to either place, I must have gone to Boston; for I think the prospect of usefulness there is greater, all things considered, than at New-York. Besides, I never would consent to become the pastor of any church whose members had not heard me preach, and become personally acquainted with me. I have not the least doubt, that, had I complied with the Cedar-street invitation, the first emotions of the congregation, on hearing me, would have been those of bitter disappointment and regret. It is true that a removal to New-York, were I fit for the place, would, on many accounts, have been very gratifying. I felt no small inclination to go. I should like exceedingly to be near you and my other relations. I should also like a milder climate than this, and I have little doubt that it would be beneficial to my health. But a removal would be death to my reputation in this part of the country; I mean my Christian reputation; and what is far worse, it would bring great reproach upon religion. At present, my worst enemies, and the worst enemies of religion, seem disposed to allow that I am sincere, upright, and uninfluenced by those motives which govern worldly-minded men. But had I gone to Boston, and much more, should I now go to New-York, they would at once triumphantly exclaim, 'Ah! they are all alike all governed by worldly motives; they preach against the love of money and the love of applause, but they will gratify either of those passions when a fair opportunity offers.' Now I had much rather die than give them an occasion thus to speak reproachfully. It would be overthrowing all which I have been laboring to build up. Indeed I can see no reason why God should suffer these repeated invitations to be sent to me, unless it be to give me an opportunity to show the world that all ministers are not actuated by mercenary or ambitious views. I have already some reason to believe that my refusal to accept the two calls has done more to convince the enemies of religion that there is a reality in it, than a thousand sermons would have done. However this may be, I have done what I thought to be duty. If I ever felt desirous to know the will of God, and willing to obey it, it has been in reference to these two cases. Could I have had reason to believe that it was his will, I would very gladly have gone either to Boston or to New-York. But at present I believe that it was his will that I should remain where I am. Not that I am of any use here; but though I can do no good, I would if possible avoid doing harm."

But little more than a month elapsed before the invitation of the Cedar-street church was repeated. Some changes in his circumstances led him to deliberate for a time, whether this second invitation might not be the call of Providence. He considered the obstacles which had opposed his removal as diminished. The church in Hanover-street, supposing that he might possibly be deterred from complying with this invitation by the fact that he had so recently declined a call from them, passed a resolve with a view to remove any difficulties which that circumstance might have thrown in his way, and wrote a letter urging him to act just as he should if he had never received an invitation from them. This amounted very nearly to the expression of an opinion that it was his duty to go. He was evidently much perplexed. On the one hand, he feared "doing wrong, and offending God by running before he was sent." On the other hand, the circumstances attending his reception of the call "induced him to believe that it might *possibly* be the call of God; and he could not again decline it until he had taken time for prayer and deliberation." "I have ample reason," he writes to the commissioners who tendered the invitation, "to believe that God placed me in my present situation; and I must therefore be convinced that he calls me away, before I can consent to leave it. That he does call me away, I am not yet convinced; though I admit it to be possible."

After having been long agitated by the perplexing question, it was at length referred to a council mutually chosen by himself and his church. To the council it proved almost as tedious and trying as it had to him. They were reluctant to decide against his removal, thinking it possible that a change of climate and situation, together with the diminished necessity of study, might recruit the wasted energies of his body, and prolong, for the benefit of the church, his most valuable and useful life. On the other hand, they found difficulties in the way of recommending his removal which they were not able to surmount, the principal of which was his want of a full and decided conviction of personal duty in the case. They could therefore, only advise, that, if such should be his conviction, and he should make it known to his church, they would consent to part with him.

To this state his mind had nearly approached, when its progress towards conviction was arrested, and its purpose changed by increased illness. Symptoms of pulmonary affection, added to his other maladies, excited apprehensions that his labors on earth were nearly terminated—apprehensions which, alas! proved to be but too well founded. In May following, by the advice of friends and physicians, he tried very thoroughly the experiment of riding on horseback, by making a journey through the interior of Maine, New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, to New-York city, and thence to the Springs, where his mind was disturbed by a third application to take the charge of Cedar-street church, accompanied with most pressing letters and messages from clergymen and others. Though this was declined without much hesitation, yet, in the excitable state of his nerves and his universal weakness of body, it was injurious to his welfare, and, combined with other causes, prevented his deriving any benefit from his journey and an absence of two months.

"The peculiar trials of mind," writes the clergyman with whom he lodged, "which he had passed through, in consequence of the invitations he received to New-York and Boston, well nigh broke him down, as he expressed it, and greatly aggravated his complaints and sufferings; and he had hoped to experience no more trouble from this quarter. But no sooner was it known in New-York that he was at the Springs, than fresh overtures were sent to him.—'I wonder,' said he, that this people will thus pursue a dying man. I cannot help them or myself.'—I have no doubt, from various expressions of his, that the great efforts made to effect his translation to a new field of labor, proved too much for his weak frame, and hastened his dissolution."

The language ascribed to Mr. Payson, in the preceding extract, is descriptive of his own weakness. and expresses his settled conviction of the desperate condition of his health, and not any intended censure of the people who were so perseveringly solicitous to secure his services. He could fully appreciate their motives. But they knew not how delicate and susceptible were his feelings; nor did they know how nearly exhausted in him were the springs of life. Doubtless their wishes had so far affected their judgment, as to create the confident expectation that a removal to a new field of action would be the means of restoring and establishing his health. But it was already gone past recovery.

In 1821 he was requested by persons having some control in the appointment, to say whether he would accept a professorship in the Theological Seminary at Andover, if elected to the office. But he refused "at once, and positively, on the score of not possessing the requisite qualifications. Had I been suitably qualified. I am not certain that I should not have thought it my duty to go."

CHAPTER XVII.

Letters to persons in various circumstances and states of mind.

Though Mr. Payson was eminently felicitous in adapting his public discourses to the wants and characters of a promiscuous assembly, he was, if possible, still more so, in suiting his counsels, instructions, and appeals, to the cases of individuals. But these dictates of his sanctified understanding and ardently affectionate heart are mostly lost; and their place can be supplied only by a selection from his letters, written to persons variously situated and affected—which though both interesting and instructive, are far inferior in imagery, appositeness, and effect, to his *viva voce* instructions.

To his mother under affliction of spirit:

"My dearest Mother,

"Never did I more ardently wish to impart consolation, and never did I feel so utterly powerless to do it. You say yourself, that neither reason nor religion can restrain your tormenting imagination. What encouragement, then, have I to attempt to comfort you under the evils it occasions? I wish I could communicate to you the feelings which have rendered me happy for some weeks past. I will mention the texts which occasioned them; texts on which I have preached lately. Perhaps the great Comforter may apply them to you. If so, you will little need any consolation which I can give. The first is Isaiah, 26:20. The time of our continuance on earth is but a moment; nay, it is but a little moment. Suppose, then, the worst. Suppose that all the evils which imagination can paint should come upon you. They will endure only for a *little moment;* and, while this little moment is passing away, you may run and hide in the chambers of protection which God has provided for his people, till the mansions preparing for them above are ready for their reception. O then, my dear mother, glory in these afflictions, which endure but for a moment, a little moment. O, how near, how very near is eternity! It is even at the door!

"New-year's Sabbath I preached on this text, 'As the Lord liveth, there is but a step between me and death.' One inference was, there is but a step between Christians and heaven. So it has seemed to me almost ever since. Another text, which I have preached on lately, and which has been much blessed to me, is Rev. 21:23. 'And the city had no need of the sun,' &c. O how unutterably glorious did heaven appear! It is *glory:* it is a *weight* of glory; an *exceeding weight* of glory; a *far more exceeding weight* of glory; *a far more exceeding and eternal weight* of glory. O how shall we bear such a weight of glory as this! How shall we wait with patience till we arrive at it! O, it seems too much, too boundless, too overwhelming to think of. Come afflictions; come troubles; come trials, temptations, distresses of every kind and degree; make our path through life as painful, as wearisome as you can; still if heaven is at the end of it, we will smile at all you can do. My dear mother, break away; O that God would enable you to break away from all your cares and sorrows, and fly, rise, soar up to the New Jerusalem. See its diamond walls, its golden streets, its pearly gates, its shining inhabitants, all in a blaze with reflected light and glory, the light of God, the glory of the Lamb! Say with David, Toward this city I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. My mother, what a righteousness is this! The righteousness of God! A righteousness as much better than that of Adam, nay, than that of angels, as God is better than his creatures. Since, then, my dear mother, you have such a heaven before you; such a righteousness to entitle you to heaven; and such blessed chambers to hide in, during the little moment which separates you from heaven—dry up your tears, banish your anxieties, leave sorrow and sighing to those who have no such blessings in store or reversion, and sing, sing, as Noah sat secure in the ark, and sang 'the grace that steered him through.'

* * * * *

"I would urge my dear father to be more careful of himself, if I thought it would do any good; but it will not. The nearer he gets to his sun, his centre, the end of his course, the faster he will fly, and you cannot stop him. Catch hold of him, and fly with him, and I will come panting after as fast as I can."

To a kinsman, in an important crisis of his religious experience:

—— "In your present situation, and for some time to come, your greatest difficulty will be to maintain the daily performance of closet duties. On your maintaining that part, the fate of the whole battle will turn. This your great adversary well knows. He knows that if he can beat you out of the closet he shall have you in his own power. You will be in the situation of an army cut off from supplies and re-enforcements, and will be obliged either to capitulate or to surrender at discretion. He will, therefore, leave no means untried to drive or draw you from the closet. And it will be hard work to maintain that post against him and your own heart. Sometimes he will probably assail you with more violence when you attempt to read or pray than at any other time, and thus try to persuade you that prayer is rather injurious than beneficial. At other times he will withdraw and lie quiet, lest, if he should distress you with his temptation, you might be driven to the throne of grace for help. If he can prevail upon us to be careless and stupid he will rarely distress us. He will not disturb a false peace, because it is a peace of which he is the author. But if he cannot succeed in lulling us asleep, he will do all in his power to distress us. And when he is permitted to do this, and the Holy Spirit withdraws his sensible aid and consolations; when, though we cry and shout, God seems to shut out our prayers—it is by no means easy to be constant in secret duties. Indeed, it is always most difficult to attend to them when they are most necessary. But never mind. Your Lord and Master is looking on. He notices, he accepts, and he will reward every struggle. Besides, in the Christian warfare, to maintain the conflict is to gain the victory. The promise is made to him that endures to the end. The object of our spiritual adversaries, then, is to prevent us from enduring to the end. If they fail of effecting this object they are defeated. Every day in which you are preserved from going back they sustain a defeat. And if, by praying yesterday, you gained strength enough to pray to-day; and if, by praying to-day, you gain strength enough to pray again to-morrow, you have cause for thankfulness. If the food which you take every day nourishes you for one day, you are satisfied. You do not expect that the food you ate yesterday will nourish you to-day. Do not complain, then, if you find it necessary to ask every day for fresh supplies of spiritual nourishment; and do not think your prayers are unanswered, so long as you are enabled to struggle on, even though it should be with pain and difficulty. Every day I see more clearly how great a mercy it is to be kept from open sin and from complete apostasy. If you are thus kept, be thankful for it."

To a gentleman in a neighboring state, whose hospitality he had enjoyed while on a journey for his health, and who has since yielded to the expostulations of his revered friend, and is now numbered with the people of God:

"The unvarying kindness and hospitality with which I was treated while at your house, has left an impression upon my mind, and laid me under obligations which, I trust, will never be forgotten. In addition to this, the apparent interest with which you listened to remarks on religious subjects, and your request that I would write to you and pray for you, have led me to feel a more than ordinary concern for your future welfare. It is this which induces me to write—yet I must confess that I write with trembling. The numerous instances in which I have seen religious impressions fade away, lead me to fear that, ere this, the subject may have ceased to appear interesting to you, and that you will not thank me for troubling you with this letter. But I will, for the present, hope better things, and, under the influence of such a hope, will venture to write. Yet what shall I say, ignorant as I am of the present state of your mind, and, of course, equally ignorant of what it requires? I have been imploring that omniscient Being, who is perfectly acquainted with it, to guide my pen, and lead me to write something which may prove 'a word in season.' Should he grant me this, it would be a favor indeed.

"Perhaps I ought to address you as a Christian. Perhaps you have, ere this, become a cordial, decided disciple of Jesus Christ. I am not entirely without hope that this is the case. Few things could give me more pleasure than to be assured that it is so. If it is, you will need no exhortations from me to pursue a course which you have already found to be 'ways of pleasantness and paths of peace.' If it is, you have already 'tasted and seen that the Lord is good;' you know his goodness, not speculatively, or by report merely, but experimentally; and you can address the Savior in the language of Peter—'I believe and am sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' But, if this is not the case, if your mind remains in the same state in which I left it, the following hints may possibly prove serviceable:

"God, as a wise Being, employs means and instruments suited to the work which he designs to perform. He never employs powerful means or dignified agents to effect a work which might as well be effected by weak means and feeble agents. He would not employ an angel to do the work of a man; he would not send his only Son to perform works which did not transcend the powers of an angel. Hence we may infer, that, if men or angels could have effected the work of man's redemption, God would not have employed his own Son to effect it; and, if that Son could have effected it in any easier way than by dying on the cross, he would never have consented to die in that manner Consider then, my dear Sir, how great a work this must have been. To *create* the world cost Jesus Christ but six days; but to *redeem* the world cost him thirty-three years, spent in poverty and labor, and the shedding of his own blood. How great, then, must have been the evils from which he did all this to redeem us! How terrible must be the situation of sinners, since he suffered so much to rescue them from it! From the dignity of the Physician and the costliness of the remedy we may learn how dangerous, how desperate was the disease. Only let a man say, with firm conviction—'My situation was so dangerous, so hopeless, that nothing less than the incarnation and death of God's eternal Son could save me from it,' and he will scarcely remain at rest until he has secured salvation. He will not, cannot rest in a situation so dangerous.

"But these facts and inferences, obvious as they are, we are prone to overlook. There is a species of religion which appears to us much more rational and agreeable than the doctrines of the cross. It is, indeed, little better than deism; for Christ has almost no place in it. It may, therefore, be useful to attend to such passages as these:—'All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father:'—'He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father:'—'He that denieth the Son, hath not the Father.' Christ says—'No man cometh to the Father but by me:'—'In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.' Now, if all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ, no man can obtain any portion of that fullness without applying to Christ. In a word, Christ's language is—'Without me ye can do nothing.' Never, then, shall we do any thing successfully in religion, unless we apply for and obtain this assistance. We must begin with Christ. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

"I have written at random, and in the dark respecting your present feelings. I can scarcely hope that these broken hints will be of any service. But they will, at least, serve as a proof that I have not forgotten your kindness, and that I feel an interest in your welfare. This interest is deeper than you are, perhaps, aware. It would gratify me much to hear from you and still more to hear that you are 'rejoicing in the truth.' Be pleased to remember me respectfully and affectionately to Mrs. ——. I have not forgotten her kindness. Our journey, after we left you, was tolerably pleasant, but of little service to my health. * * May we all meet in heaven, is the frequent prayer of

"Yours sincerely."

To a distant lady, in whose piety he had full confidence, but who was much discouraged respecting herself:

"My dear Mrs. ——

"What a task you have imposed on me! You require me to write you a letter which shall make you feel, and yet you tell me that the Bible, the letter which God himself has sent to you from heaven, does not make you feel. If I believed this to be the case could I write with any hope of success? Could I hope to affect a heart which a message from heaven does not affect? But I do not, cannot believe that this message has failed to affect you. Your letter to Mrs. P. contains proof that it has not. In that letter you say—'I hate myself while I write.' But hatred of one's self, or self-abhorrence, is one of the constituent parts of true repentance. No one but the real penitent, no one who is not a Christian, hates himself. He who abhors himself, sees and feels it to be right that God should abhor him. He can accordingly take part with God against himself—justify God while he reproaches and condemns himself. And he who can do this is prepared to embrace the Gospel, to receive it as glad tidings of great joy. Are you not then, my dear madam, proved to be a Christian out of your own mouth? If you do not choose to yield to proof from that source, let me request you to come with me to the mount of transfiguration. We may, like the disciples, feel emotions of fear as we enter the bright cloud which overshadows it, but we have no reason to entertain such emotions. Now contemplate Him who stood on the summit in the midst of this bright cloud. See his countenance shining like the sun, and his raiment white as the light. See all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in him, diffusing itself around. Hear the awful voice of the eternal Father, proclaiming—'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' Recollect all that you have heard and read of the Being before you. Think of his power to save, of his willingness to save, of his delight in saving sinners. And now, what does your heart say to all this? What reply does it make when the Savior, turning upon you a look full of invitation, benevolence, and compassion, says to you—Fear not, Mary, to approach me; I am come to seek and to save that which was lost: shall I save thee? Wilt thou consent to have me for thy Savior upon my own terms? Wilt thou believe that I am disposed to look with an eye of pity on thy struggles against sin, and to assist thee in overcoming it? Wilt thou believe that I can bear with thee, forgive thee, have patience with thee, and never be weary of instructing thee, reclaiming thee, and leading thee forward in the way to heaven? And now, my dear madam, let me ask once more, What reply does your heart make to this language? Does it not say, with Peter—'Lord, it is good to be here'—it is good to sit at thy feet, and hear thy word; I believe, I am sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?—If this is the language of your heart, he does, in effect, say to you—'Blessed art thou, Mary-Ann; for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.' Blessed art thou, for thou hast chosen the good part, and it shall never be taken from thee. But perhaps you will say—for you have to dispute against yourself—'I believe nothing, feel nothing of all this.' Let me then make another trial. St. Paul, speaking of ancient believers, says—'If they had been mindful of the country whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to return thither; but they desired another country, even a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.' Now permit me to apply this passage to your case. If you are mindful of the world, if you wish to return to that careless, sinful state of conformity to it from which you are professedly come out, you have opportunity to return to it; there is nothing to prevent you. But can you say that you wish to return? Can you deny that you desire a better country, even a heavenly? If you do desire it, if you have no wish to return to the service of sin, then God is not ashamed to be called your God; and if he is no ashamed to be called your God, then you ought not to be afraid to call him so; but ought to approach him with confidence, crying, 'My Father! my God!'"

The following letter of condolence to his bereaved parents contains some reminiscences of a most valuable woman, which ought to be preserved, and which will be gladly recognised by great numbers, to whom she was endeared by "the good works and alms-deeds which she did:"

"*May* 4, 1818.

"My dear afflicted Parents,

"You will probably hear from poor brother Rand before you receive this letter, that you have one child less on earth to comfort you in the decline of life; that dear, dear Grata has gone before you to heaven. I cannot hope to console you; but I do hope that your surviving children will feel bound to do every thing in their power to make up your loss, by increased filial affection and concern for your happiness. I cannot mourn for Grata. How much suffering of body and mind has she escaped by her early departure! But I mourn for poor brother Rand, for his motherless children, and for you. It would be some consolation to you, could you know how much she was beloved, how greatly her loss is lamented, how much good she did, and how loudly she is praised by all who knew her

I doubt not that hundreds mourn for her, and feel her loss almost or quite as much as do her relatives. Mr. H., who preached her funeral sermon, gave her a most exalted character; and a young lady who resided a few weeks in Mr. Rand's family, speaks of her every where as the most faultless person with whom she was ever acquainted.

"Many, many prayers have been offered up, both here and at Gorham, that you may be supported and comforted when the tidings reach you; and I hope and trust they will be answered. Thanks be to God that you are loved and blessed by many who never saw you, on account of your children. Mr. Rand feels great hopes that her loss will be blessed to his church and people; and that she will do more good in her death, than she has done in her life; and from what I saw at the funeral, I cannot but indulge similar hopes. You will wish to know how he bears the loss; but I can hardly tell. When I saw him he had been in a state of confusion, and surrounded by his mourning people from the moment of her death; so that, as he more than once observed, he could scarcely realize that she was dead, or tell how he felt. The worst is yet to come; but I doubt not he will be supported. I hope, too, that her loss will do me some good. The suddenness of her departure makes the other world appear very near; and she seems as much, and even more alive, than she did before. I preached with reference to the subject yesterday; and could not but hope that her death might be blessed to some of my people, or at least to some of the church."

To two of his flock, who, in their absence from home, were to receive with this letter the afflicting intelligence of the death of their only child:

"My dear brother and sister in Christ, and now brother and sister in affliction, the letters which accompany this will inform you why I write. I see and share in the poignant grief which those letters occasion; nor would I rudely interrupt it. I will sit down and weep with you in silence for a while; and when the first gush of wounded affection is past; when the tribute which nature demands, and which religion does not forbid, has been paid to the memory of your dear departed babe, I will attempt to whisper a word of consolation. May the 'God of all consolation' make it such. Were I writing to parents who know nothing of religion, I should indeed despair of affording you any consolation. My task would be difficult indeed, nor should I know what to say. I could only tell them of a God whom they had never known, of a Savior with whom they had formed no acquaintance, of a Comforter whose consoling power they had never experienced, of a Bible from whose rich treasures they had never been taught to derive support. But in writing to you, my only difficulty is of a very different kind. It consists in selecting from the innumerable topics of consolation contained in the Scriptures, those which are best adapted to your peculiar situation. So numerous are they, that I know not which to mention or which to omit. May God guide my choice and direct my pen. It is needless, in writing to Christian parents, to *you*, to enlarge on the common topics of consolation. I need not tell you *who* has done this—who it is that gives and takes away. I need not tell you, that 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.' I need not tell you of the great duties of resignation and submission, for you have long been learning them in a painful but salutary school. And need I tell you that he who inflicts your sufferings, knows their number and weight, knows all the pain you feel, and sympathizes with you even as you once sympathized with your dear babe; for as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. O think of this; the pity, the parental pity, of a God. Who would not willingly be afflicted to be thus pitied! Go then, my dear brother and sister, and lean with sweet confiding love upon the bosom of this pitying, sympathizing Friend; there deposit all your sorrows, and hear him saying, The cup which *I* give you, my children, will you not drink it? Remember he knows all its bitterness. He himself mentions the grief of parents mourning for a first-born and only child as exceedingly great. Remember, too, that taking this bitter cup with cheerfulness from your Father's hand, will be considered by him as an unequivocal token of your filial affection. Now I know that thou lovest me,' said he to Abraham, 'seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.' It requires the same kind of grace, if not the same degree of grace, to resign a child willingly to God, as to sacrifice it on the altar; and if you are enabled thus to resign your babe, God will say to you, Now I know that ye love me, seeing ye withheld not your child, your *only* child, from me. If at times, when 'all the parent rises in your bosoms,' these consolations should prove insufficient to quiet your sorrows, think on what is the situation and employment of your dear departed child. She is doubtless praising God; and, next to the gift of Christ, she probably praises him for giving her parents who prayed for her and dedicated her to God. She now knows all that you did for her, and loves and thanks you for it, and will love and thank you for ever; for though natural ties are dissolved by death, yet those spiritual ties which unite you and your child will last long as eternity. She has performed all the work and done all the good for which she was sent to us, and thus fulfilled the end of her earthly existence; and if you have been the means of bringing into being a little immortal, who had just lighted on these shores and then took her flight to heaven, you have reason to be thankful; for it is an honor and a favor. Neither your existence nor your union have been in vain, since you have been the instruments of adding one more blest voice to the choirs above. But I must close. May God bless you, support and restore you to us in safety, is the prayer of your affectionate friend and pastor,

"EDWARD PAYSON."

A letter of counsel to a candidate for the ministry:

'MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I rejoice to learn that you are in part released from the bondage in which you have been so long held. That you *are* released, I infer, first, from the fact that you are *preaching;* and secondly, from your having written me a letter. But what a request does your letter contain!—That I should write to you *systematically!* *I*, who never did any thing systematically in my life, but have always lived extempore! If I write to you, it must be in the same way. It will be the easiest thing in the world to give you plenty of good advice. All the difficulty will be to make you follow it. If you are like me, you will never learn any thing to any purpose till it is beaten into you by painful experience; and even then you will probably forget it in a tenth part of the time which it took you to learn it. However, I will tell you one thing which experience has taught me. If you will believe it on my word, it will save you some suffering. If not, you must learn it, as I did, under the scourge.

"Some time since I took up a little work, purporting to be the lives of sundry characters as related by themselves. Two of those characters agreed in remarking that they were never happy until they ceased striving to be great men. This remark struck me, as you know the most simple remarks will strike us, when Heaven pleases. It occurred to me at once, that most of my sins and sufferings were occasioned by an unwillingness to be the nothing which I am, and by consequent struggles to be something. I saw that if I would but cease struggling, and consent to be any thing or nothing, just as God pleases, I might be happy. You will think it strange that I mention this as a new discovery. In one sense it was not new; I had known it for years. But I now saw it in a new light. My heart saw it, and consented to it; and I am comparatively happy. My dear brother, if you can give up all desire to be great, and feel heartily willing to be nothing, you will be happy too. You must not even wish to be a great Christian; that is, you must not wish to make great attainments in religion, for the sake of knowing that you have made, or for the sake of having others think that you have made them. Very true and very good, you will say, though somewhat trite; but how am I to bring myself to such a state? Let me ask in reply, why you are not troubled when you see one man receive military and another masonic honors? Why are you not unhappy, because you cannot be a colonel, a general, or a most worshipful grand high priest? Because, you answer, I have no desire for these titles or distinctions. And why do you not desire them? Simply because you are not running a race in competition with those who obtain them. You stand aside and say, Let those who wish for these things have them. Now if you can in a similar manner give up all competition with respect to other objects; if you can stand aside from the race which too many ministers are running, and say from your heart, 'Let those who choose to engage in such a race divide the prize; let one minister run away with the money, and another with the esteem, and a third with the applause, &c. &c.; I have something else to do, a different race to run; be God's approbation the only prize for which I run; let me obtain that, and it is enough;'—I say, if you can from the heart adopt this language, you will find most of your difficulties and sufferings vanish. But it is hard to say this. It is almost impossible to persuade any man to renounce the race without cutting off his feet, or at least fettering him. This God has done for me; this he has been doing for you. And you will one day, if you do not now, bless him for all your sufferings, as I do for mine. I have not suffered one pang too much. God was never more kind than when I thought him most unkind; never more faithful than when I was ready to say, His faithfulness has failed. Let him fetter you then, if he pleases. Consent that he should cut off your feet, if he pleases. Any thing is a blessing which prevents us from running the fatal race which we are so prone to run; which first convinces us that we are nothing, and then makes us willing to be so."

To an aged mother, suffering great anxiety on account of the disheartened and comfortless condition of her son:

"You give yourself too much trouble about P. After you have prayed for him as you have done, and committed him to God, should you not cease to feel anxious respecting him? The command, 'Be careful for *nothing*,' is unlimited; and so is the expression, 'casting *all* your care upon him.' If we cast our burdens upon another, can they continue to press upon us? If we bring them away with us from the throne of grace, it is evident we do not leave them there. With respect to myself, I have made this one test of my prayers. If, after committing any thing to God, I can like Hannah come away, and have my conscience no more sad, my heart no more pained or anxious, I look upon it as one proof that I prayed in faith; but if I bring away my burden, I conclude that faith was not in exercise. If God has any work for P. to do, he will cause him to do it. He made him as he made every thing else, for his own glory, and he will cause his glory to be promoted by him. Of course I should not urge this as a reason for neglecting to counsel or pray for him; but as a reason why, when we have performed these duties, we should be free from all care and anxiety respecting the event. The case of Cowper, which you feared would do me hurt, did me much good. It led me to such reflections as these:—If God could, without injury to himself or his cause, suffer such a mind as that of Cowper to rust in inaction, to be fettered by nervous difficulties and temptations, or to be uselessly employed for ten years together in translating a pagan poet, is it any wonder that he should leave my little mind to be fettered and crippled, and my time to pass away in a useless manner? After all, I am treated more favorably than he was; and I desire to be thankful that it is no worse with me. You may make similar reflections respecting P.'s case. Should God leave him in his present state all his days, it would be nothing new in the history of his dealings with his people. And you will allow that he has a right to do it, and that he will not do it unless it is for the best. Where, then, is any reason for anxiety? I should like indeed to have God make use of me to do great things; and you would like to have him employ P. to do great things; but if he chooses to leave us both crippled and useless, we must submit."

To the Rev. Daniel Temple, missionary to Western Asia·

"*Portland*, *Oct* 13. 1822.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I dare not decline the correspondence which you propose. The common rules of civility, to say nothing of Christian affection, forbid it. Yet I do not engage in such a correspondence without reluctance. I feel none of the confidence which you express, that it will prove beneficial to you. Did your sphere of action resemble mine, it is barely possible that I might suggest some hints which would be useful. But the situation of a missionary in Palestine differs so widely from that of a minister in a Christian country, that no advice which I can give would afford you any assistance. And the distance between us increases my unwillingness to write. Almost any thing in the form of a letter might answer, were it to be sent only a few miles; but a letter which is to cross the seas, which is to go to Palestine, ought surely to contain something worth reading. Even gold and silver are almost too bulky to be sent so far. Such a letter should resemble bank notes, or bills of exchange. But such a letter I have no hopes of writing. The faculty of condensing much in a small compass, is one of the many faculties which I do not possess. However, I will write. May he who knows in what circumstances this letter will find you, guide me to write something which may prove a 'word in season.'

" One of the principal results of the little experience which I have had as a Christian minister, is a conviction that religion consists very much in giving God that place in our views and feelings which he actually fills in the universe. We know that in the universe he is all in all. So far as he is constantly all in all to us, so far as we comply with the Psalmist's charge to his soul, 'My soul, wait thou *only* upon God;' so far, I apprehend, have we advanced towards perfection. It is comparatively easy to wait upon God; but to wait upon him *only*—to feel, so far as our strength, happiness, and usefulness are concerned, as if all creatures and second causes were annihilated, and we were alone in the universe with God, is, I suspect, a difficult and rare attainment. At least, I am sure it is one which I am very far from having made. In proportion as we make this attainment we shall find every thing easy; for we shall become, emphatically, men of prayer; and we may say of prayer as Solomon says of money, that it answereth all things. I have often thought that every minister, and especially every missionary, ought frequently to read, or at least call to mind Foster's Essay on the Epithet Romantic. If you have not his Essays at hand, you may perhaps recollect some of his concluding remarks. After showing that it is highly romantic to expect extraordinary success from ordinary means, he adds to this effect—'The individual who should solemnly resolve to try the best and last possible efficacy of prayer, and unalterably determine that heaven should not withhold a single influence which the utmost effort of persevering prayer could bring down, would probably find himself becoming a much more successful agent in his little sphere.' Very few missionaries since the apostles probably, have tried the experiment. He who shall make the first trial, will, I believe, effect wonders. May you, my dear brother, be that happy man. Nothing that I could write, nothing which an angel could write, would be necessary to him who should make this trial. I trust that you will find our Master is as really present in Palestine as he was in the days of his flesh; that you will sometimes enjoy his presence in the very places in which it was formerly enjoyed by the apostles. We read that on one occasion they 'returned to Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.' If we were, in like manner, to come to his feet every evening, and tell him where we have been, what we have done, what we have said, and what were our emotions through the day; we should, I believe, find it both pleasant and profitable. Perhaps he would say to us, as he did to them, Come apart, and rest with me awhile. May hè often invite you to rest awhile with him, to refresh you when faint and weary, and, after a long life of usefulness, take you to rest with him for ever *in his own heaven.*

"I write no religious intelligence, for you will have it in the Recorder. I may however mention that the ministers in this state agreed to observe the first day of the present year as a day of fasting and prayer. In consequence, we have had more revivals in the state this year than in any former year, though none of them has been very extensive. About forty have been added to our church. We long to have good news from Palestine; but are aware that we must wait and pray long, before we can expect to hear much.

"I commend you to God, my dear brother, and send this letter merely as a proof of Christian affection."

To a ministering brother at a distance, whose labors were suspended by sickness:

"I thank you for your letter, though, in consequence of the unfavorable information which it communicated respecting your health, it gave me quite as much pain as pleasure. I had hoped to hear a better account of you. But why do I say hoped? or what business have I to talk of hoping or fearing, when God is ordering every thing in infinite wisdom and mercy? The fact is, I usually find it much easier to acquiesce in my own afflictions than in those of my friends; for I can see that afflictions are absolutely necessary for me, but do not see with equal clearness that they are necessary for them. But if I do not see it, God does, or he would not afflict them. As you are in his hands, you will be well the moment that he sees it best you should be so; and why should I wish you to be well any sooner? However, I should be glad to hear that the time is arrived, and that you are able to resume your labors. If you are not, and are inquiring of your Master what he would have you do, his answer is, 'Lie down at my feet and be quiet, till I give you strength to get up and work.' But he knows we had rather labor than suffer; and that we had rather labor and suffer too, than be laid aside; and therefore he sometimes lays us aside for awhile, in order to try us with what is most disagreeable. Besides, no man is fit to rise up and labor, until he is made willing to lie still and suffer as long as his Master pleases. But I had almost forgot that I am writing a letter, and not a sermon. This is the less to be wondered at, because I laid aside a sermon to scribble to you. I will try to be less forgetful in future.

"The revival which you predicted is not arrived; and, what is worse, we see no signs of its approach, unless increasing deadness is a sign. At the last union prayer-meeting I proposed that all the churches should unite in observing a day of fasting and prayer, and assemble in the morning at one meeting-house, in the afternoon at another, and in the evening at a third. No objection was made; but it was thought best to appoint a committee to consult each church in form. If they agree to the proposal, as I think they will, we shall appoint some day next week, and have notice given from the pulpits on the preceding Sabbath.

* * * *

"I hope the good people of B., C., &c. have become quiet again, since La Fayette's departure. When will the Savior be invited to visit us, and be welcomed as he was? Not, I am afraid, in my day, nor yours.

"I have nothing more to say, except that my health is in the best state possible; and yet it is very bad. I leave you to solve the riddle, if it is one, at your leisure. When you have nothing better to do, write to me, and tell me that you are the better for having been sick."

To a kinsman under spiritual trials:

'My dear Brother,

"I have just received your doleful epistle, and though parochial cares press upon me—having just returned from a journey—I must snatch a moment to answer it. Would to God I could write something which would prove serviceable, but I fear I shall not. However, I will make the attempt, and may God bless it. You have no reason to suppose that there is any thing peculiar or discouraging in your present situation. God is dealing with you as he did with Hezekiah when he left him, to try him, that he 'might know all that was in his heart.' If you have ever read Mr. Newton's description of grace in the blade, in the ear, and in the full corn, you will recollect that he mentions 'desire,' as the characteristic of the first stage, and 'conflict' as that of the second. If I understand your letter, you have entered on the stage of conflict, and must now expect more distressing proofs of the desperate wickedness of your heart than you had before experienced. In another letter Mr. Newton says 'I believe God never gives his people much of a victory over the world till he has left them to feel how great is its power over them.' This remark, I have no doubt, is true; and God, I trust, is now preparing you for a victory over the world, by showing you more of its strength and your own weakness. Besides, I have no doubt that your present trials are occasioned, in part, by the state of your health. But, however this may be, let me assure you, that so long as sin is seen, hated, resisted; so long as we groan under it, and struggle against it, it shall not harm us. Do not, then, yield to discouragement; do not neglect the means of grace, as you will sometimes be strongly tempted to do; do not cease struggling, because your struggles *seem* to avail nothing; but continue, like Gideon, though 'faint, yet pursuing.' Could I tell you what bitter proofs I have had of my desperate, desperate depravity—how often I have been brought to my wits' end—how often I should have chosen strangling and death rather than life, and how I have been carried through all, it would, I think, afford you some encouragement. But perhaps you will say, 'If I could feel distressed, if I were not so stupid in this situation, it would encourage me.' And how, let me ask, are you to learn that your heart is like the nether mill-stone, except by being left for a time to feel that nothing can either melt or move it? I do not, of course, mean to justify or excuse this hardness of heart. It is a most abominable and detestable evil, and I should be very sorry to say any thing which should lead you to think lightly of it; still, if our hearts are hard and wicked in a far greater degree than we ever conceived of, it is surely best that we should know it; else, how should we ever be duly grateful to our great Physician for healing us? Heal you he will, my dear brother, I doubt not; but he will first make you know how sick, how mortally sick you are. In consequence, you will think more highly than ever of his kindness, faithfulness, and skill; you will love much, because much has been forgiven you; and you will be better prepared to join in the song of 'Worthy is the Lamb.' I must again, however, beseech you not to let sin turn these precious truths to poison, by tempting you to think lightly of sin; and not by any means be driven from attempting to read, watch, meditate, and pray. In your present situation, this is the great danger. You will be strongly tempted to despondency and unbelief, and when these evils prevail, you will be tempted to neglect the means of grace as useless, or as means which you cannot use aright. Resist this temptation, and all will be well."

Filial and fraternal duty happily recognised:

My dear Mother,

"I should sooner have answered your last, had I not expected ere this to see you. But the stage disappointed me. I had engaged a place in it, and sat up all night waiting for it, but it did not come. Thus, no doubt for some wise reasons, my visit to you was prevented. I had two particular reasons for wishing to come. One was, to talk with P. He is certainly wrong; he is entangled in a snare of Satan; he *can* pray, and he must pray; he has no excuse. His unwillingness to have you press him on the subject is wrong. I know all about it. I have been in the same snare myself. Whatever P. may now think, he will, sooner or later, be convinced that the grand difficulty lies, not in his nerves, but in his heart. I hope he will not pretend that his constitution is more shattered, or his health worse than mine. But I have never seen the time when I could not pray, if my heart was right. Let him not think, however, that I mean to censure him harshly. I have been too guilty myself to allow of this. But I do beseech him, if he has any regard to his happiness here or hereafter, not to let Satan persuade him that he is unable to pray. There have been many seasons in which I could pray only while walking my study, and, even then, only in short, vehement ejaculations. If I knelt down, my head was so confused that I could do nothing. Let him resolve that he will spend some time every day in prayer, if he can do nothing more than cry, 'Lord, pity me! Lord, help me!' He is ruined if he does not.

"The other reason why I wished to see you, was to know what your plans and wishes are respecting your place of residence when H. moves. I thought that you might perhaps feel unwilling to move so far as New-York. I hope it is needless to tell my dear mother that if she chooses to make her home with us, we will do all in our power to make her home comfortable. I hope she will consult nothing but her own inclinations. If her children can do any thing to make the remainder of her days comfortable, I trust they all have a full disposition to do it. She has only to say the word, and we will place her where she thinks she will be most comfortable.

"You will be glad to hear that, for a few weeks, I have enjoyed some respite from my sufferings. I observed the last anniversary of my ordination, and the first day of the present year, as days of fasting and prayer; and though I could do little more than groan and sigh, a blessing has followed. I have suffered none too much. Not one pang could have been spared. Should I suffer hereafter, do not let it distress you. It is all necessary; all will be well at last."

Trembling Christians directed to the source of joy and strength:

"Many of the church have been so much distressed that I thought it necessary to comfort them if possible, and on Sabbath morning preached from 1 Sam. 12: 20–24, 'Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness,' &c. My design was to show trembling, desponding Christians, that, notwithstanding all their great wickedness, they ought still to follow God with confidence and increasing diligence; and that, if they would do this, they need not despond or despair when God shows them what is in their hearts. Meditate on the passage, if you please; and I hope it may encourage you as much as it did the church. I have preached more respecting Christ of late than ever; and am more and more convinced that the knowledge of Christ crucified is the one thing needful, the grand source of peace, and joy, and growth in grace. Count all things loss for the excellency of this knowledge, and pray for it more than for any thing else, and you will find it to be so."

To a brother who shrunk from his duty through depression of mind and an erroneous opinion of his own qualifications for the ministry. Lest any should use the authority of Dr. Payson's name to urge men to assume the sacred office without the requisite qualifications, it ought to be stated that the person addressed in the following letter, besides possessing decided piety, had passed through a regular course of preparatory studies at a theological seminary:

"My dear Brother,

"Your letter found me more than ordinarily hurried; but I feel it to be so important that you should be licensed this fall, that I must snatch a moment to answer it. Your feelings, as you describe them, are just like mine, only less aggravated by long continuance. I mention this that you may pay more regard to my advice. I am as certain that it is best for you to take license immediately, as I can be of any thing. Rely upon it, that if you delay, your difficulties will increase, and you will feel more and more as if it was impossible to preach. Your only safety lies in placing yourself in circumstances which will make exertion necessary, and which will secure divine assistance. Never mind your infirmities. You have nothing to do with them. Your business is to trust, and go forward. If you wait till the sea becomes land, you will never walk on it. You must leave the ship, and, like Peter, set your feet upon the waves, and you will find them marble. Christ is a good Master. He wont suffer you to sink; and you will at length glory in your infirmities. I would not give up the precious proofs which I have received, in consequence of my weakness, of his power, faithfulness, and love, for all the comforts of good health. But be assured, that, if you remain as you are, Satan will weave a net round you which you will never break. Every mental and religious effort will become more difficult and painful; your mind will be like the body of a rickety child; you will live a burden to yourself and friends, and die without the consolation of having been made useful. This would infallibly have been my fate, had I not been thrust into the ministry before I well knew what I was about. Yet you see I have somehow or other been carried along, and so will you be. Do not then, my dear, dear brother, stand hesitating. A feeble, nervous man must not deliberate, but act; for his deliberation will not be worth a straw, but his activity may be, and probably will be, useful both to himself and others.

"When Christ told his disciples to feed the multitude with five loaves, they did not hesitate and say, Lord, let us first see the bread multiplied; if we begin, and have not enough, we shall be put to shame—but they distributed what they had, and it increased in the distribution. So you will find it. You *must*, therefore, go forward. There is no reason why you should not. If you delay, indolence will steal upon you, and bind you in chains which you will never break.

"I charge you then, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to be up and doing. There are fifty places in this state where the most unconnected things which your lips could utter would do good, and be well received. You have no conception by what apparently feeble means God often works wonders. Let the next tidings I hear from you be, that you have crossed the Rubicon; or rather let me see you here forthwith in the character of a preacher.

"My health is as usual, but my Master is more than usually kind. At my request the church lately had a special meeting to pray for me. God has heard them wonderfully, and my cup runs over."

Prudential advice on the preservation of health, addressed to a student in divinity:

'My dear Brother,

"I am very sorry to learn that your health is not better, but rather worse than when I was at R. Should it not have improved before you receive this, I beg you will attend to it without delay; attend to it as your first and chief duty; for such be assured it is. 'A merciful man is merciful to his beast;' and you must be merciful to your beast, or, as Mr. M. would say, to your 'animal.' Remember that it is your Master's property; and he will no more thank you for driving it to death, than an earthly master would thank a servant for riding a valuble horse to death, under pretence of zeal for his interest. The truth is, I am afraid Satan has jumped on to the saddle, and when he is there in the guise of an angel of light, he whips and spurs at a most unmerciful rate, as every joint in my poor broken-winded animal can testify from woful experience. He has temptations for the conscience, as Mr. Newton well observes; and when other temptations fail, he makes great use of them. Many a poor creature has he ridden to death, by using his conscience as a spur; and you must not be ignorant, nor act as if you were ignorant of his devices. Remember Mr. Brainerd's remark, that diversions rightly managed, increased rather than diminished his spirituality. I now feel that I am never serving our Master more acceptably than when for his sake I am using means to preserve my health and lengthen my life; and you must feel in a similar manner, if you mean to do him much service in the world.

He knows what you would do for him if you could He knows that your spirit is willing, when your flesh is weak. Do not think less favorably of him than you would of a judicious, affectionate father. Do not think that he requires you to labor, when such a father would enjoin rest or relaxation. Ride, then, or go a fishing, or employ yourself in any way which will exercise the body gently, without wearying the mind. Above all, make trial of the shower bath. You can easily fix up something which will answer the purpose. Try it first, about ten o'clock in the morning, when the weather is warm; and if you feel a glow after it, it does you good; but if it occasions chilliness, you must rather try a warm bath. My dear brother, do attend immediately to these hints, for much depends upon it."

To two young sisters, the children of distant friends:

—— "I wish to show you that I feel a deep interest in your eternal welfare, and am willing to do any thing in my power to promote it. There is a circumstance related in the book of Judges, respecting the early part of Samson's life, which suggests some thoughts that may perhaps be useful to you. We are there told that 'the child grew, and that the Lord blessed him, and that the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times.' I have no doubt that, in a little different sense, the Spirit of God begins very early to move, at times, upon the minds of children and young persons; especially of those who, like Samson, have pious parents, and have been, like him, dedicated to God. He has thus, I believe, at times moved upon your minds. Have you not reason to suppose that he has? Have you not sometimes had serious thoughts and feelings arise in your minds without any apparent cause? Have you not found something within you which urged upon you the necessity of prayer, of remembering your Creator, and of preparing for death? My dear young friends, that something was the Spirit of God moving upon your minds. Whenever such thoughts and feelings rise without any external cause, you may be certain that He is near you. Have you not also found that religious instruction affects you very differently at different times? Sometimes, perhaps, it scarcely affects you at all. At other times the same truths take firm hold of your attention and excite your feelings. Now, what occasions this difference? It is this. At one time the Spirit of God presses home the truth upon your minds and causes it to affect you. At another time He does not apply it, and then it produces no effect. Our Savior, you recollect, compares the operations of the Spirit to those of the wind. Now, when you see the branches of a tree agitated without any visible cause, you conclude at once that the wind is blowing upon them. Just so, when your minds are interested and affected in a serious manner by religious considerations, you may conclude that the Holy Spirit is moving upon them. And can you not recollect many seasons, or at least some seasons, in which He has thus moved upon them? If so, consider how great a favor, how great an act of condescension it was on the part of God, thus to visit you. Had He sent an angel from heaven to warn you, you would have thought it a great favor. You would have been ready to ask with surprise, Why does the infinite, everlasting God condescend to send an angel from heaven to promote our welfare? But for God to send his Spirit to move upon your minds is a much greater favor, a much greater act of condescension, than it would be to send an angel to you. O then how greatly ought you to love and thank him for such a favor, and how carefully should you cherish, how humbly should you yield to the motions of this heavenly visiter! Are you still favored with his visits? Does he still move, at times, upon your minds? If so, be careful, O be scrupulously careful not to grieve him, and cause him to forsake you. But perhaps he has already withdrawn from you. If so, will you not implore his return? Will you not, after reading this, kneel down and say, 'Lord, I have ungratefully neglected and grieved thy good Spirit, and he has justly withdrawn from me. It would be just should he never return to me. Yet, in thy great mercy, let him return and again move upon my mind; let him come, and enlighten and sanctify me.' Let this be your daily urgent request."

To his parents, under various and accumulated afflictions:

"What a catalogue of trials does your letter contain! I am more and more convinced of what I have long suspected, that God tries his people, first, with inward, spiritual trials; and then, when they have acquired some degree of experience, and faith has become strong, he visits them with outward afflictions.

"Dr. Owen says that Heb. 12 : 6 ought to be rendered, 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; yea, also, he *severely chastiseth*, above the ordinary measure, those sons whom he accepts and *peculiarly de-*

lights in.' If this rendering be correct—and the doctor certainly makes it appear so—my parents have reason to think themselves special favorites. Perhaps, for a short time before death, God's people may be, in a measure, exempted from both inward and outward trials.

"I have tried to write, because your letter ought to be answered, and because I wished to write something consolatory under your afflictions; but I can only echo back your groans!"

To a Christian brother of rank and wealth:

"I have thought much of your situation since I left you. It is but seldom that God gives one of his children so many temporal blessings as he has given you. He has hitherto preserved you, and will, I trust, continue to preserve you from the evils which attend a state of prosperity. But it is, as you are aware, a dangerous state, and calls for great watchfulness and much prayer. You are, doubtless, conscious of many evil propensities working within; but they may work long, and produce much internal mischief before their effects become external and visible to others. The effects of temporal prosperity upon the mind resemble those of an unhealthy atmosphere upon the body. The constitution is gradually and almost insensibly undermined and weakened; and yet no particular part can be pointed out as the seat of the disease, for the poison is diffused through the whole system. Spiritual lassitude, the loss of spiritual appetite, and an indisposition to vigorous spiritual exertion, are some of the first perceptible symptoms that the poison of prosperity is at work. When a man detects these symptoms in himself, it is time for him to be alarmed. If he delays a little longer, the disease will make such progress as to render him insensible to his danger. Were I placed in such a situation I should be ruined in six months. Still, your situation is, in one respect, desirable. It is one in which you may do much for the glory of God and the promotion of his cause."

To his revered mother, on leaving her habitation, at the final dispersion of her family, August, 1824:

"My dear Mother,

"I was a little surprised, when you were with us, to hear you say nothing of the unpleasantness of being obliged, at your age, to remove far from the place where you had spent so many years. It seemed to me that such a removal must involve many circumstances which would be very disagreeable, and even painful. But, as you said little or nothing on the subject, I concluded that it did not appear equally unpleasant to you. It seems from your letter, however, that the time of trial had not then arrived, and that you have since been troubled about your removal, as I expected you would be. I am glad to find that the trial has now lost something of its bitterness, and that you feel reconciled to go where Providence calls. You have some illustrious examples among God's ancient servants to encourage and instruct you. Abraham, called to leave his country and his father's house, and Jacob, obliged in his old age to go down into Egypt, had trials harder, probably, than yours, though of the same nature. But they went, and God went with them; and he will go with you; doubt it not. On the other hand, see how he dealt with his enemies. 'Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel; therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed.' You have no been at ease from your youth, and you have been emptied from vessel to vessel, and you are now to be emptied again from one vessel to another. And surely this is better than to be treated like Moab, and possess his character. Besides, as God said to Jacob in his old age, 'Fear not to go down into Egypt;' so he says to you, 'Fear not to go wherever I call; for my presence shall go with you.' I hope you feel no anxieties of a pecuniary nature. While one of your children has any thing, you will not want. But why do I say this? Rather let me say, The Lord is your Shepherd, and, while he possesses any thing, you shall not want. Poor ****, too, will be taken care of. As to *******, I can only say once more, Leave him with his Master. He knows what to do with him, and he will do all things well. If he chooses rather that ******** should suffer, he will overrule all his sufferings for good. Only pray for him, and then leave him.

"I preached yesterday on this passage:—'Though he will not give him because he is his friend, yet, because of his *importunity* he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.' This, as well as the parable of the unjust judge, evidently teaches that importunate prayer will prevail when nothing else can. A man may pray ten times, and be denied; and yet, by praying ten times more, obtain the blessing. Had the Syro-Phœnician ceased after making three applications to Christ, she should have gone away empty; but, by applying once more, she obtained all that she asked.

"It has been a time of trial with me, as well as with you, since we parted. I have been reduced lower, in point of health, than on any former occasion. For four weeks I was unable to preach, and doubted whether I should ever preach more. But this was all my trial, and I was kept very quiet. My sermon on 'Be still,' &c. followed me, and God in mercy inclined me to be still. My people urged me very strongly to make a voyage to Europe, and offered to supply the pulpit and pay all my expenses. But, though I should like well enough to see Europe, I could not feel any freedom to go. I did not like to have so much expense lavished upon me, nor did I know how to lose so much time as such a voyage would require. I am now better, and have been able to preach the three last Sabbaths. But I seem to preach in vain. There is no noise nor shaking among the dry bones; and, even of the church, I may almost say, There is no breath in them. But I am kept from impatience, and am not *quite* discouraged. As I know how desirous you feel that your children should love each other, I would tell you, if I could, how much I love E. I loved her much before her last visit, and she endeared herself still more to us during that visit. I believe, too, that I love my brothers *pretty well*. Do tell them so. What you say respecting the complaints of ministers who visit us, I have heard before. I do not wonder at it. They have some reason to complain. But the reason of our apparent coldness is what you suppose it to be. Pressed down to the very dust as I usually am, I cannot always dress my countenance in smiles, nor prevent it from expressing my sufferings. Hence I am unpopular among ministers. It is a trial, but I cannot help it.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

His private character—His affections and demeanor as a husband, father, master, friend—His gratitude, economy, generosity—His temper of mind under injuries.

It is not every character that will bear a close inspection. The more intimately some men are viewed, the less veneration and respect are felt for them. This is true of some in elevated stations, and possessing no small share of public confidence. Even the church presents this anomaly. A man may bear a saint-like visage abroad, and yet be a very fiend in his own family; may put on meekness and devotion in a worshiping assembly, while he is the haughty tyrant of his wife and children; may preach self-denial and condescension, and yet carry it lordly towards the inmates of his own dwelling, making them the ministers of his will and pleasure, or else imbittering their existence by his savage temper and unreasonable complaints.

Professional men, whose public duties are very numerous and urgent, are liable to fail in many of those minute regards which contribute so much to heighten the

> ——— "only bliss
> Of paradise which has survived the fall."

With the prevailing desire and purpose to yield to every claim its due consideration, they are in danger of thinking that they do well if they are only indifferent to those of the least imposing description which originate in their domestic relations; that they are not only excusable, but disinterested and praiseworthy in neglecting, from devotion to the public welfare the ten thousand little attentions to a wife's comfort and children's instruction and enjoyment, which, though each requires but a moment's time, and taken singly, scarcely deserves specification, constitute, in the aggregate, the principal part of domestic felicity. But a man's circumstances must be very peculiar, to render these two classes of duties incompatible with each other. The look of affection, the kind word seasonably interposed, the helping hand which love extends, the eye ever awake to anticipate the little wants of the household, the heart prompt to seize opportunities to soothe sorrow, to calm excited feelings, to inspire and promote joy, and to alleviate the burden of maternal anxieties and cares which press incessantly upon the wife—what sacrifice of public duty do these require? Yet who can calculate the misery which they prevent, or the blessedness which they confer? As it is not great calamities which render men unhappy, but petty injuries, and provocations, and disappointments, constantly recurring, too trifling to excite public sympathy, or to be made the subject of loud complaint—so it is not insulated acts of profuse generosity, and widely separated, though extravagant expressions of affection, which constitute the reality or the happiness of friendship—especially of a friendship so pure and endearing as ought ever to subsist between those who are united by conjugal ties. These holy bonds are cemented and strengthened by daily and hourly acts and expressions of kindness. And where, in the whole compass of motives, could a consideration be found to enforce this conjugal tenderness, so affecting and impressive as that example of love to which St. Paul refers the husband for a pattern of his own duty?—and it may be added, what other reference could have conferred such exalted honor on the marriage relation?—"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church. Be not bitter against them." This was Dr. Payson's law in all that pertained to conjugal duties; and to this his daily practice exhibited as exact a conformity perhaps as is ever seen in this state of imperfection. Reasons have already been suggested why a sparing use should be made of those letters which exhibit his tenderness and fidelity in this relation; but a few extracts may with propriety be introduced:

"*At Sea, May* 10, 1815.

"MY DEAR WIFE,

"As this is the first time I have had occasion to address a letter to you since we were married, I thought it necessary before I began, to consider a few moments by what title to address you. The result of my meditations was a determination to employ the term 'wife' in preference to any other. If you ask why I prefer that name, I answer, Because it reminds me that you are mine, my own. I might call you 'Dear Louisa,' 'Dear friend,' or 'Dear' any thing else—and it might mean only that you were a sister, a friend, or a favorite. But when I call you 'My wife,' it seems to me to mean every thing sweet, amiable, and endearing. It not only reminds me that she to whom I write is, under God, *mine*, but that she is mine by the gift and appointment of God—mine by the sacred bond of marriage, which seems to give an air of sacredness to our union. After all, I have not said what I meant to say, but something a little like it. So do you try to imagine what I meant to say, and then confess that I have succeeded better than you, in choosing a title with which to head a letter For my own part I would rather you should call me 'Dear husband,' than 'Dear friend,' or 'Dear Edward,' &c. However, call me by what name you please, your letters will always be precious while they continue to utter the language of affection. I have just been reading one of two which I have already found among my baggage. If you knew the pleasure they gave me, you would feel well paid for the trouble of writing. I fully intended to write at least one to you, and leave it behind me; but I could think of no place to put it, in which you would be certain to find it. But I must hasten to give you some account of our voyage:

"Friday and Saturday we had fair winds and pleasant weather, and I was not at all sea-sick. But on Sunday it began to rain and blow hard. In the evening it increased to quite a gale, but was still favorable; so that, on Monday noon, we found ourselves, by observation, ninety miles south of Philadelphia. Since that time we have been beating about, vainly trying to get within the capes of Delaware. We have just taken a pilot on board, and hope to reach Philadelphia in about forty-eight hours. Since the gale on Sunday the doctor and I have been very sick, and able to eat nothing. For two days and nights, without intermission, I was tormented with one of my nervous headaches. This morning it has left me, and I begin to feel something like an appetite. I will only add now, as an excuse for writing so miserably, that I am at this moment tossing and rolling about worse than a boy in a swing, or on the end of a plank. Every thing near me, which is movable, rolls from side to side incessantly; and I should do the same, did I not hold on to something stable. I will therefore defer the conclusion of my letter till I am more established.

"*Philadelphia*, *May* 11.

"We arrived here last night after a most delightful sail up the Delaware. Wind and tide both favored us, so that we came at the rate of eleven miles an hour, for ten hours successively. Scarcely ever have I experienced so much pleasure in one day. Every body seemed happy. Dr. —— and I were in high health and spirits; the prospect on the banks of the river was delightful, and changing every moment; the day was fine, and the swiftness of our motion was very agreeable; and, to crown all, I saw God in his works, and tasted of his goodness in every thing. Excess of pleasure was almost painful; before night I was fairly weary of enjoyment, and wished for sleep. I thought of you almost every moment; and nothing but the presence of yourself and the children was wanting to render me as happy as I can ever be in this world. Last night I dreamed that I had reached home. I felt your tears of affection upon my cheek, and little Edward's arms round my neck; but I awoke, and it was a dream. I have not yet been ashore. Every body on board is in a bustle; the passengers hastening to visit their friends, and I standing away in one corner alone, talking with my best, dearest earthly friend. You, at the distance of five hundred miles, have more attractions for me than the whole city of Philadelphia, which lies spread out before me, and on which I have scarcely, as yet, bestowed a glance. If I did not write thus early I should not be able to send my letter to-day; and you would be obliged to wait one day longer before you heard from us. I now begin to regret that I did not urge you more to meet me at New Haven. It would be a great gratification to have you so much nearer to me, and to think of meeting you so much sooner. I still have a faint hope that you will be there.

"Kiss the children for me; talk to them about me; love me, as I do you, better than I did—yes, far better than I did, when I wrote the last letter to you before we were married. Love to all who inquire for me. God be with you, bless you, keep you, my dear, dear wife.

"So prays your affectionate husband."

In a letter written during another season of absence is the following beautiful passage, in which the gentle and the severe are most charmingly blended:

—— "Though your letter was consoling, it grieved me for a moment. It did not seem to breathe so much tenderness as your former letters; but I soon perceived the reason. Your mind was braced up to help me to bear my burdens; and in such a state of mind it is not easy to feel or express tenderness. I hope you will remember this remark. You know that I am often obliged, while at home, to put on all the iron I can command, in order to bear up against trials and discouragements; and many times, when you know nothing of it, I am engaged in most distressing inward conflicts. Now, how can a man seem tender and affectionate at such a time? How could a soldier, in the heat of battle, stop to smile upon his wife or kiss his children? Even if he spoke to them at such a time the highly raised state of his feelings would probably give something like sharpness to his voice. But I forbear excuses. Christ was tender and affectionate in the severest agonies, the most distressing conflicts. I hope, if I am ever permitted to return, you will find me a little more like him than I have been."

In his strictly domestic letters he sometimes hits off the different humors, peculiarities, relations and circumstances of himself and his connections with inimitable vivacity, and a sportiveness which shows how he could unbend himself when occasion required. A short passage from the close of one such letter will serve as a specimen of the qualities alluded to; and, like his satire upon quackery, may serve a more important purpose than mere amusement. In the keen irony which pervades it, is an effectual rebuke of that doating partiality which leads so many parents to think their own children prodigies of genius:

"As to baby, she is to be the greatest genius and the greatest beauty in these parts. I could easily fill a sheet with proofs of her talents. Suffice it to say that she has four teeth; stands alone; says *pa'* and *ma'*; *no—no*—very stoutly; and has been whipped several times for being wiser than her father."

With a heart always more ready to confer favors than to receive them, his condition was very frequently such, that he needed rather "to be ministered unto than to minister;" but the most agonizing sufferings of body, when exempted from depression of mind, never rendered him the less cheerful and agreeable husband and father. It is astonishing how "lightly he esteemed such afflictions." They seemed to affect him almost as little as violence inflicted on a block or a stone. His demeanor under bodily agonies has often been such that he was rather envied than pitied by his family and attendants. These were, indeed, seasons of unusual gayety and cheerfulness. He has left a description of the accumulated evils that were crowded into a few days, into which his playful imagination has thrown so much of humor as to divest the subject of its repulsive character, and clothe it with no ordinary attractions. But it is chiefly interesting as an illustration of a happy temper:

—— "Since I wrote last I have been called to sing of mercy and judgment. My old friend the Sick Headache has favored me with an unusual share of his company, and has seemed particularly fond of visiting me on the Sabbath. Then came Cholera Morbus, and, in a few hours reduced me so low that I could have died as easily as not. Rheumatism next arrived, eager to pay his respects, and embraced my right shoulder with such ardor of affection that he had well nigh torn it from its socket. I had not thought much of this gentleman's powers before; but he has convinced me of them so thoroughly, that I shall think and speak of them with respect as long as I live. Not content with giving me his company all day for a fortnight together, he has insisted on sitting up with me every night, and, what is worse, made me sit up too. During this time my poor shoulder, neck and back seemed to be a place in which the various pains and aches had assembled to keep holyday; and the delectable sensations of stinging, pricking, cutting, lacerating, wrenching, burning, gnawing, &c. succeeded each other, or all mingled together, in a confusion that was far from being pleasing. The cross old gentleman, though his zeal is somewhat abated by the fomentations, blisters, &c. with which we welcomed him, still stands at my back, threatening that he will not allow me to finish my letter. But enough of him and his companions. Let me leave them for a more pleasing theme.

"God has mercifully stayed his rough wind in the day of his east wind. No horrible, hell-born temptations, no rheumatism of the mind has been allowed to visit me in my sufferings; but such consolations, such heavenly visits as turned agony into pleasure, and constrained me to sing aloud whenever I could catch my breath long enough to utter a stanza. Indeed, I have been ready to doubt whether pain be really an evil; for, though more pain was crowded into last week than any other week of my life, yet it was one of the happiest weeks I ever spent. And now I am ready to say, Come what will come—sickness, pain, agony, poverty, loss of friends—only let God come with them, and they shall be welcome. Praised, blessed for ever be his name for all my trials and afflictions! There has not been one too many—all were necessary, and good, and kind."

How perfectly versed was he in the heavenly art of extracting the choicest sweets from the bitterest cup! "honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." How much anguish must such a demeanor under sufferings have saved "the partners of his blood!" What rare and exquisite enjoyment must it have imparted to them, to witness a happiness which the calamities of life could not mar! It was surely an enviable privilege to enjoy instructions rendered so emphatical and impressive by the circumstances of the teacher.

In another extract may be seen the tender yearnings of a father's heart—a heart, nevertheless, in a state of sweet subjection to "the Father of spirits, who chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness:"

"*May* 13, 1816.

"Your welcome letter, my dear mother, has just arrived. You would pity me, if you knew in what circumstances I sit down to answer. For ten days I have been in what Dr. Young calls the post of observation, darker every hour. Poor little Caroline lies before me, writhing under the agonies of dropsy in the head. The physicians have given her over. Louisa sits before me making her shroud; yet she will probably live a week longer; her distress increasing every day, till death closes it. I thought that I was almost without natural affection; that I did not love my children; but I find to my cost that I do. Her distress wrings every nerve and fibre of my heart. If you have ever seen a person die of this dreadful disorder, I need not describe it. If you have not, description can give you but little idea of it. I am, however, mercifully spared the keener distress of being unreconciled to the trial. As yet, I can bless the name of the Lord, and I bless him that I can. Whether I shall continue to feel so to the end, he only knows. It is painful to see her suffer for my sins. It is dreadful to think of having provoked such a being as God is, to inflict such sufferings. But it is right. The affliction is too light, as indeed every affliction short of eternal death would be. I find a great difference between the effect of suffering in my own person, and in the person of another. Personal sufferings seem to harden the heart, and make me selfish, so that I can feel little for others. They will drag one's attention home to himself. But suffering in the person of another seems to have an effect directly opposite, and is, therefore, more beneficial. I needed some such trial, to teach me how to sympathize with my people in similar circumstances."

For more than a week afterwards he watched this child, "struggling between life and death"—the victim of complicated diseases, the effects of which it would be difficult to describe, and almost congeal one's blood to read. Yet he was calm "as the morning when the sun ariseth;" and though his health was impaired by watching, in addition to his labors, he says of this season—"it has been, on the whole, a happy week. I have been unusually free from spiritual trials; and any thing which frees me from them is a blessing. Be not distressed on our account. We are happy, and can sing 'sweet affliction,' &c. I would not but have had it on any account."

It will add nothing to the strength of the impression produced by these extracts, to say that he was a most kind and tender husband, a most faithful and affectionate father; but it is adding something to their import to affirm that, in him, these qualities were uniform, and manifested in his daily intercourse with his household.

He was the companion of his children. Not unfrequently would he descend, as it were, to their level, and mingle for a few moments in their pastimes, and even invent new diversions for them; particularly such as would call forth exertions of skill and ingenuity—so that their very amusements might prove a profitable exercise, and contribute to the developement of their intellectual faculties. Games of chance, and every thing which bore a distant resemblance to them, he utterly disallowed. He delighted to amuse them with pictures, at the same time pouring into their minds a knowledge of the arts, or of historical characters, or of geographical and statistical facts, or of the natural history of animals, or whatever else would be most readily suggested by the picture.

Often would he entertain his children, either from the stores of his own memory or from his still richer invention, with tales and fables; from which it was their task to deduce the moral, as an exercise of their perceptive and reasoning faculties, in pay for the entertainment which he had afforded them. If they failed, he would, of course, make the application himself.

So far as he exerted himself for the intellectual advancement of his children, he did it not so much by set lessons and at seasons set apart for that purpose exclusively, as by incidental instructions. There were many days when his engagements left him no time to meet them, except at their meals; then—indeed it was his common practice—he would improve the time spent at the table for this purpose—proposing various questions, and inviting inquiries from them, always leaving them with a subject for consideration, and often calling upon them at night to mention any new idea which they had acquired during the day. He was much devoted to the welfare of his children, and his cares, burdens and maladies were oppressive indeed, when they did not share a father's attentions.

To instruct them in religion was of course his first care. Here, also, he wisely consulted their age and capacities, and imparted it in measure and kind as they were able to bear. He doubted the expediency of giving religious instruction only at stated periods, and dealing it out with parade and formality, and in tedious addresses. His motto was—"Line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little," as occasion offered, or the emergency demanded.

But he was master as well as father; "one that ruled well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." He habitually explained his commands to such of his children as were of sufficient age to understand and appreciate them; and always referred to the Scriptures as the umpire from whose decision there was no appeal. "The Bible says thus," was the invariable and ultimate argument for enforcing obedience. Appeals of this kind contribute greatly to inspire an early reverence for the sacred book. It was a willing obedience, and from exalted principles, which he aimed to secure.

He treated his domestics as if he believed that "God made of *one blood* all the people that dwell upon the earth"—as if he expected to stand with them at the bar, where "he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy." They shared his religious instructions, and were remembered in his prayers. He also exacted of his children, as an inviolable duty, kind and considerate treatment towards the domestics. To several of them his counsels and prayers were blessed. To one who *had* been anxious for her own salvation in consequence of his previous fidelity, and apparently lost her impressions, he affectionately said, as she entered the parlor bearing a pitcher of water—"I hope the time may never come when you will long for a drop of that water to cool your tongue." It was a word in season—she became a Christian. Another was about to leave his family for a gay circle, with the prospect of entering a new relation, from which he apprehended danger to her soul. At family prayer, the last time she was expected to be present, he prayed that the separation might not be eternal. The petition was remembered; she soon returned to her service in his family, exhibited evidence of conversion, and afterwards died in faith.

In his family devotions he was never tedious. They were always impressive, and adapted with surprising appropriateness to the existing circumstances of the household. He delighted to address Jehovah through Christ, as his God by covenant; and hence he derived some of those powerful arguments which he pleaded in intercession for his children, and one strong ground of hope that God would convert and save them.

To obtain any adequate conception of the manner in which God was acknowledged and honored in his habitation, recourse must be had, as in other instances, to his own language:

"*April*, 1816.

—— "Another precious passage is that in Zechariah, 'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, *Holiness to the Lord*,' &c. I preached on it lately, and, among other things, observed that, in that day, every action would be performed as the most so-

'emn religious duties are now; every house and place would be a temple; every day like a Sabbath; and every meal like the Lord's supper. We have since been trying to have the prophecy fulfilled at our house; and, though we succeed miserably enough, yet the bare attempt has given us a happiness unknown before. One thing which has been greatly blessed to us, is having family prayer at noon as well as morning and evening. It showed us how far we often get from God during the day, even when we begin and close it with him. In some families this would be impossible; and then half an hour spent alone would answer the purpose as well. I find it requires almost constant rubbing and chafing to make the blood circulate in such frozen souls as ours; and, after all, it avails nothing, if the Sun of Righteousness does not shine."

Dr. Payson was the father of eight children, two of whom, a son and a daughter, he followed to the grave. Six survive him, two daughters and four sons.

Many persons were honored with a large share of Dr. Payson's confidence; but it is very doubtful whether he ever poured out *all* the feelings of his bosom to any beyond his nearest relations, if, indeed, he did to any besides his God. It required a reach of sympathy beyond what man is ordinarily capable of exercising to enter deeply into his experience. He could not bring himself to tell of the peculiar agonies or raptures which by turns tortured and blessed him, to any heart that could not send back a response. And where, almost, could that heart be found? And in this the writer, while tracing his religious experience, has often thought he was justified by the example of Paul, after his rapture. Still, while there were secrets in his own bosom of too sacred a character to be made common by participation, his intercourse with his flock, individually, was that of a highly endearing, tender, and confidential friendship. "If there were ever a minister"—these are his own words—"blessed with a kind and faithful people, I am. If I were not so often sick, I should be too happy. When I come into my congregation, I feel as a father surrounded by his children. I do not feel as though there were an ill-disposed person among them. I can throw off my armor without fearing that an enemy is there with a dagger ready to stab me." Their affection was most fully and faithfully reciprocated. Never did a minister more ardently love his charge, or enter with greater facility into all their interests and feelings. When any of them were visited with calamity, he was among the very first to tender his sympathy; and always left them "lightened." In listening to his conversation and prayers, the burden would often fall off.

> "Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
> And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,"

he was at once faithful and tender; and if

> "Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul,"

it was because it had been pointed to the "smitten Rock," to the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

> "Comfort *came down*, the trembling wretch to raise,
> And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise."

He was eminently susceptible of gratitude. A favor which would be received with a very summary acknowledgment by many, would make his "shoulders ache under the load of obligation that was laid upon them." And if he "bore it pretty well, it was because nothing renders a man so careless about increasing his debts, as the consciousness that he shall never be able to pay."

Economy was a very noticeable feature in his character. It was a principle with him to spend nothing merely for ornament. The money which came into his possession he regarded as a talent for which he was accountable; and so scrupulous was he as to the disposition which he made of it, that he is thought to have regarded some things as forbidden luxuries which would have been for his welfare. In his furniture, in his apparel, and that of his household, and in the provisions of his table, there was a plainness and a simplicity well becoming a man professing and teaching godliness. Connected with this quality was a noble generosity of soul. He did not save to hoard, but to bless others. He did not love money for its own sake; and so obvious to all was his disinterestedness, that, so far as is known, he never fell under the charge or even the suspicion of being avaricious. If the temporal or spiritual necessities of his fellow-creatures demanded relief, his money was as free for their use as a cup of cold water. He had declined purchasing an article of convenience for the family one morning, because, as it was not absolutely necessary, he thought they could not afford it. The same day he gave ten dollars to a woman in reduced circumstances, who called at his house. At another time he said to his church, who had handed in their contribution of fifty or sixty dollars for foreign missions—"I am ashamed to send so small a sum, and shall forward one hundred dollars as your contribution; and you may act your pleasure about indemnifying me." These are only instances out of a multitude; the same liberality characterized him as long as he lived. He continued to give till after he was unable to put his name to a subscription paper. It was with reluctance that he received from his people what they were forward to give as a compensation for his services; and for two successive years he actually relinquished four hundred dollars. He never would have possessed a dwelling-house in fee if his people had waited for his consent Acting according to the impulse of their own liberality, and their convictions of what was due to him in return for the sums which he had relinquished, they purchased and secured to him, by deed, a house more spacious than he would have chosen; and this was all his property, beyond actual expenditures, which he did not give away.

In this connection a document will be introduced, containing a request, such as it would be equally honorable to ministers and people if there were more frequent occasion for:

" *To the members of the Second Parish in Portland, in parish meeting assembled—*

" GENTLEMEN,

" It is a circumstance which claims my thankful acknowledgments, and of which I hope ever to retain a grateful recollection, that, while many ministers are constrained to ask, and perhaps ask in vain, for an increase of salary, the only request relative to a support which I have ever had occasion to present to you is, that my salary may be diminished. Such a request, you will recollect, I made through the medium of one of the congregation at your last annual meeting; but your kindness and liberality prevented you from complying with it. I now repeat that request in writing. The salary which you voted me at the time of my settlement is amply sufficient for my support; and more than this I am unwilling to receive; for I can never consent to acquire wealth by preaching the Gospel of Christ. Permit me then respectfully, but earnestly, to request that the addition which you have so generously made to my salary, the last two years, may be discontinued.

"That the Master whom I serve may repay all your kindness to his servant, is the first wish and most earnest prayer of

"Your deeply indebted and grateful pastor,
"EDWARD PAYSON.

"*Portland, April* 27, 1821."

In the same spirit, after his last sickness had made such inroads upon his strength as almost wholly to disqualify him for exertion, he dictated the following communication:

"*April* 27, 1827.

"*To the members of the Second Congregational Church in Portland, in parish meeting assembled—*

'BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,

"Of the kindness and generosity with which you have invariably treated me ever since I became your pastor, and especially since the commencement of my present indisposition, I am deeply sensible. Nor have you given me the smallest reason to suppose that your kindness is exhausted, or even diminished. But I must not allow myself to encroach upon it too far. It is my indispensable duty to prefer your spiritual welfare to every personal consideration. If I have reason to believe that your religious interests would be promoted by a dissolution of the connection between us, it is incumbent on me to request that it may be dissolved; and to retire from a station, the duties of which I am no longer able to perform. And have I not reason to believe that such is the fact? With the present state of my health you are sufficiently acquainted. It has already occasioned you much trouble and expense. You have waited a reasonable time for its restoration, and the probability that it will ever be restored is by no means great. It is highly important that such a society as this should enjoy the services of a minister who possesses a vigorous constitution, firm health, and ministerial qualifications of the first order; and the salary which it gives entitles it to expect, and will enable it to command the services of such a minister. In view of these circumstances, I feel a prevailing persuasion that it is my duty to propose a dissolution of the connection between us, and to request you to unite with me in calling a council for the purpose of dissolving it. Such a proposition and request I now submit to you.

"That on this and every other occasion you may be guided by that wisdom which is from above, and led to the adoption of such measures as shall be most conducive to the glory of God and your own best interests is the prayer of

"Your affectionate friend and pastor,

"Edward Payson."

This request met a most honorable reception. Their reply to it expressed the most "deep and affectionate sympathy with their much esteemed pastor, and a sense of their high obligations for the very valuable services which a kind Providence had permitted and enabled him to perform for a long course of years; and appreciating his present services, much as they were interrupted and curtailed by sickness, of paramount value and interest to them, they did respectfully solicit that he would be pleased to withdraw his request; and thus permit them to hope, that whatever might be the state of his health in future, they should enjoy the benefit of his counsel and prayers, till he was called to receive the reward prepared for the faithful servants of Christ."—With these wishes, so affectionately and gratefully expressed, he complied; and continued, in such ways as he could, to advance their spiritual interests, till removed by the undoubted will of God.

But there are in the lives of eminently faithful ministers, events of another character, which it is painful to narrate, and yet which ought not to be passed over in silence. The hostility which they sometimes experience illustrates the depravity of mankind, and confirms the authority of Scripture by evincing the truth of the declaration—"If any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution." Dr Payson was such "a terror to evil doers," that from time to time they seemed bent on destroying his reputation, and multiplied their slanders till they ceased to gain any credence even with the vilest. When these designs upon his character proved abortive, their enmity manifested itself in other forms.

He once alludes to this opposition in his letters. It was in a year eminently distinguished by God's blessing on his labors.

'*July* 4, 1810.

—— "Enemies rage most terribly. You have probably seen in the papers an account of the attempt to burn our meeting-house. We have not discovered the author; but there is no doubt that —— ——— are at the bottom of it. It was little less than a miracle that the house was not burnt, with many others. Never since I have been here, has the enmity of the heart been permitted to rage as it does now."

CHAPTER XIX.

Further particulars relating to his personal history and religious exercises. in connection with his pastoral labors and their results.

It was not thought desirable to interrupt a description of "the pastor in action" by frequent references to dates; or to pay any special regard to chronological order in a rehearsal of scenes and employments which were more or less common to every year of his ministry. In this chapter, however, that order is resumed, for the purpose of continuing the history of his religious experience through the various occurrences and vicissitudes of his life. The particulars will be given almost entirely in his own language, and in insolated extracts, which will be found, however, to possess the principal advantages of a connected narrative, besides several others which no second-hand statements could secure. They were sketched at the time, and have the vividness of first impressions in view of truths and facts as they were successively brought under notice, while the circumstances in which they are penned are a sufficient guarantee of their accuracy. The articles of intelligence, and modes of elucidating and enforcing truth, which are interspersed, will enhance their value; while they will enable the reader to view the subject of this Memoir in a greater variety of attitudes, and to learn his exercises and feelings in numerous circumstances—in prosperity and under the rod; when borne along on the full tide of success, and when thwarted at every step; when religion was triumphant, and when "the ways of Zion mourned."

"*Portland*, *June* 14, 1813.

'MY DEAR MOTHER,

"We arrived here last Friday in safety, and found every thing had been preserved by our merciful Protector. We very soon had reason to acknowledge how much his protection is superior to ours; for, the very night after our return, our garden was laid waste.

"For a few days after my return I was exceedingly unwell, and there seemed less prospect of my continuing in the ministry than ever. In addition, I was more severely exercised with spiritual trials than I have been for two years past; so that the five days succeeding my return were, perhaps, as dark as any five days that I ever experienced. But now, blessed be God! the scene has wonderfully changed. For three days I have felt something more like health than I have enjoyed for years; something of that spring and elasticity of spirit which used to render life tolerable and exertion pleasant. How long it will continue I know not. It seems too good to last. I see, however, already, that if the burden of sickness is to be removed, some other burden, perhaps a worse one, must be imposed in its place. I am ready to run wild with the pleasure of not feeling pain; though, even now, I am not altogether free from it. If my health should be restored, I shall consider it as little less than a miracle; and shall feel as if your deafness may be removed. Indeed I think it will strengthen my faith as much as it will my body. It will also remove some spiritual difficulties and doubts, which have been a terrible hinderance to me in my race, and given unbelief more advantage over me than all other things united. But how I ramble!

"We have little encouraging of a religious nature, though the church are, I believe, much engaged. They ought to be; for I find that 'Portland Christians' have at least a *name* to live at the westward; a better name, I fear, than they will ere long deserve, even if they merit it now."

"*September* 12, 1814.

—— "I engaged to go on a mission, if my people would consent; but they will not hear of it. The church would consent, but the congregation will not. You will learn from the newspapers that we are in a state of alarm here, or I should say nothing of it. Ever since our return the streets have been filled with wagons, &c. carrying goods out of town, and the alarm continues and increases. We had hoped to have a quiet Sabbath yesterday; but in the morning the chairman of the committee of public safety called and informed me that the committee had issued a hand-bill, requiring all the male citizens to work through the day on the fortifications, and stating that the usual religious services of the day must be dispensed with. With this order our church absolutely refused to comply, and we had divine service both parts of the day as usual, and a considerably large congregation. This morning all is bustle and confusion through the town We have sent a few things to Gorham; and, in case of an attack, we can pack into the chaise and follow. You have no reason to entertain the smallest fears for our personal safety. In ten minutes after an alarm is given we can be safe out of town. The church seem to feel in some measure as I could wish: strong confidence in God, mingled with a deep sense of ill-desert and submission to his will. They have a prayer-meeting every evening; and next Thursday, if circumstances will permit, we are to have a fast. At our house all is still and quiet. We hear little of the noise, and have slept undisturbed every night till the last. I cannot think we are in much danger. Not that great dependence is to be placed in our means of defence; but I cannot think God means to destroy this place. We needed something to rouse us, and to remind us that we were engaged in war, and to excite us to pray for the removal of God's judgments; and this effect the alarm has, I trust, produced. It tends powerfully to wean us from the world; so that, thus far, it has been a mercy."

"*Nov.* 14, 1814.

—— "We are going on as well as can be expected L. is well; little L. better than for a year past; my own health slowly but gradually improving. Our souls too, I hope, are not *quite* so far from prospering and being in health as they have been; the church are reviving, and there are many hopeful appearances in the congregation. But the best of all is, that we seem to be waking up in this part of the country, as well as in others, to the state of public morals. Delegates from nineteen towns in this vicinity met in this town last week, and adopted a number of measures to secure the proper observance of the Sabbath. A similar meeting for the county of Lincoln is to be held this week at Wiscasset. These things, and others of a similar nature, of which I hear abroad, almost lead me to cry with old Simeon—'Let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation!' We shall yet see peace upon our Israel; and I have very little doubt, that, after the war ceases, we shall have greater revivals through the land than we have ever yet seen. It was harder to do what has been done, both in the world and among us, than to do what remains. The wheel is now in motion, and will be kept so with comparative ease. It is a glorious day to live in! So much to be done; so much to be prayed for; so much to be seen. I was wrong in saying I wished to depart in peace. I wish to stay, and see, and do a little more. I would not now exchange a place in the church below, even for a place in heaven. The longer our time of labor is, the better. There will be time enough for rest.

"Dr. —— died last week. I saw him repeatedly during his illness, but not a word of a religious na ture did he utter; and I am told he said as little to others. He was a minister upwards of fifty years. What a meeting it must be, when a pastor meets all who have died under his ministry during so many years; especially if he has never faithfully warned them!

"Our people feel the consequences of the war very much. I am astonished to see how well they continue to pay my salary; and still more, to see how liberally they give to every proper object. Their deep poverty serves to set off the riches of their liberality. If they were like many congregations, I should soon be dismissed. Many, however, have moved away on account of the war; and if it continues, the rest must follow. However, we serve a good Master; and while he has work for us to do, he will feed us. I rejoice to to learn that you find 'the joy of the Lord your strength.' It is strength indeed. I hope my father finds as much reason to rejoice in the progress of reformation in New-Hampshire as we do here."

"*June* 2, 1815.

—— "I shall not be able to visit Rindge this summer. Journeying does me so little good, and I have been absent so long, that I shall not dare to think of it at present. Were it possible, I would come about the time of the ordination of the Missionaries at Newburyport, to which our church is invited; but I fear it will not be.

"I am sorry for poor ——; but my sorrow is mitigated, if not removed, by reflecting that if he is a Christian all things are working for his good; and if he is not, an education will do him more harm than good. I have grown quite hard-hearted as it respects the trials of Christians. I scarcely pity them at all while under the rod, though I am sorry we all need it so much. However, I sympathize with you, my dear mother, in your want of hearing. It is a grievous trial; and if, as you intimate, frequent letters will in any degree mitigate it, I will strive to write oftener. I trust our revival has not ceased; though it will not, I fear, prove so extensive as I at first hoped."

"*Sept.* 7, 1815.

—— "Do not feel anxious about me. I am, you know, in good hands—in better hands than yours; and when you consider how good God has been to me, you can have no reason to fear that he will deal with me otherwise than well.

"I have little to write, respecting our situation in a religious view, that is encouraging; but things look promising in many other places at a distance. You have heard of the revivals at Litchfield and New-Haven. An account of these revivals, read in Rowley, has occasioned the commencement of a similar work there, which promises to become extensive. There is also considerable attention among the students in —— Academy; and a letter, which I have just received from a gentleman in Baltimore, informs me that there is a revival in an academy in that vicinity, and in two or three other places. It certainly appears more and more probable that God is about to work wonders in most of our seminaries of learning; and, if so who can calculate the blessed effects which will be the result?

"The revolution in Dartmouth College makes a great noise here. Losing Mr. Brown will be a grievous blow to me. I think the trustees could hardly have made a better choice."

On perusing the following, it is difficult to repress a wish that the writer had been under the necessity of "fitting up a house" every year:

"*Portland, November* 1, 1815.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I fear you will think me very negligent in delaying so long to answer your letter; but I have an excuse ready. We have been moving, and repairing our house, and I have been almost incessantly engaged night and day. We have had half a score of workmen in the house, and I have been obliged to superintend and work with them; and this, in addition to parochial duties, has so hurried me that I have scarcely had time to eat. You will be glad to hear that my cares and labors have had a very beneficial effect with respect to my health, so that I have gained more in fourteen days than in as many months previous. I have also enjoyed a much higher degree of spiritual health than usual, and have had many special mercies, both of a temporal and religious nature; so that I have seldom passed six happier weeks than the last. Our house proves much more convenient than we expected, and we have seen much of the wisdom and goodness of God in bringing us into it. It is the same house in which I formerly boarded when preceptor—in which I spent some months in folly and sin, and in which I received the news of Charles's death, and began to turn my attention to religion. These circumstances give it an interest of a peculiar kind, and furnish matter for many humbling, many mournful, and not a few thankful and profitable reflections. O what a Master do I serve! I have known nothing, felt nothing all my days, even in comparison with what I now see in him. Never was preaching such sweet work as it is now. Never did the world seem such a nothing. Never did heaven appear so near, so sweet, so overwhelmingly glorious. * * * God's promises appear so strong, so solid, so real, so substantial—more so than the rocks and everlasting hills; and his perfections—what shall I say of them? When I think of one, I wish to dwell upon it for ever; but another, and another, equally glorious, claims a share of admiration; and when I begin to praise, I wish never to cease, but have it the commencement of that song which will never end. Very often have I felt as if I could that moment throw off the body without staying to 'first go and bid them farewell that are at home in my house.' Let who will be rich, or admired, or prosperous; it is enough for me that there is such a God as Jehovah, such a Savior as Jesus, and that they are infinitely and unchangeably glorious and happy."

The year 1816 was the most remarkably distinguished for the effusions of the Holy Spirit on his people of any year of his ministry, with the exception of that in which his happy spirit took its flight, when he preached so much from the bed of death. This fact the reader will regard as a striking commentary on the subjoined extracts from his diary:

"*Dec.* 16, 1815. Since the last date I have passed through a greater variety of scenes and circumstances than in almost any period of equal length in my whole life, and have experienced severer sufferings, conflicts, and disappointments. Some time in February I began to hope for a revival; and after much prayer for direction, and, as I thought, with confidence in God, I took some extraordinary and perhaps imprudent measures to hasten it. But the event did not answer my expectations at all; and in consequence I was thrown into a most violent commotion, and was tempted to think God unkind and unfaithful. For some weeks I could not think of my disappointment with submission. There were many aggravating circumstances attending it, which rendered it incomparably the severest disappointment, and, of course, the most trying temptation I had ever met with. It injured my health to such a degree that I was obliged to spend the summer in journeying to recover it. This, however, did not avail, and I returned worse than I went away, and plunged into the depths of discouragement. Was obliged, sorely against my will, to give up my evening lectures, and to preach old sermons. After a while, however, my health began to return, though very slowly. God was pleased to revisit me, and to raise me up out of the horrible pit and miry clay in which I had so long lain; and my gratitude for this mercy far exceeded all I felt at my first conversion. Sin never appeared so odious, nor Christ so precious before. Soon after this my hopes of a revival began to return. About a month since very favorable appearances were seen, and my endeavors to rouse the church seemed to be remarkably blessed. My whole soul was gradually wrought up to the highest pitch of eager expectation and desire; I had great assistance in observing a day of fasting and prayer; the annual thanksgiving was blessed in a very remarkable and surprising manner, both to myself and the church. From these and many other circumstances I was led to expect, very confidently, that the next Sabbath, which was our communion, would be a glorious day, and that Christ would then come to convert the church a second time, and prepare them for a great revival. I had great freedom in prayer, both on Saturday night and Sabbath morning; and after resigning, professedly, the whole matter to God, and telling him that if he should disappoint us it would be all right, I went to meeting. But what a disappointment awaited me! I was more straitened than for a year before; it was a very dull day, both to myself and the church; all my hopes seemed dashed to the ground at once, and I returned home in an agony not to be described. Instead of vanquishing Satan, I was completely foiled and led captive by him; all my hopes of a revival seemed blasted, and I expected nothing but a repetition of the same conflicts and sufferings which I had endured after my disappointment last spring, and which I dreaded a thousand times worse than death. Hence my mind was exceedingly imbittered. But, though the storm was sudden and violent, it was short. My insulted, abused Master pitied and prayed for me, that my faith might not fail; and therefore, after Satan had been permitted to sift me as wheat, I was delivered out of his power; and, strange as it even now appears to me, repentance and pardon were given me, and I was taken with greater kindness than ever to the bosom of that Savior whom I had so insulted. Nor was this all; the trial was beneficial to me. It showed me the selfishness of my prayers for a revival, and my self-deception in thinking I was willing to be disappointed, if God pleased.

It convinced me that I was not yet prepared for such a blessing, and that much more wisdom and grace were necessary to enable me to conduct a revival properly, than I had ever imagined before. On the whole, though the past year has been one of peculiar trial and suffering, I have reason to hope it has not been unprofitable, and that I have not suffered so many things altogether in vain. I have seen more of myself and of Christ than I ever saw before; and can at times feel more of the frame described in Ezekiel, 16 : 63, than I ever expected to feel a year since. The Gospel way of salvation appears much more glorious and precious, and sin more hateful. I can see, supposing a revival is to come, that it was a great mercy to have it so long delayed. My hopes that it will yet come are perhaps as strong as ever, but my mind is on the rack of suspense, and I can scarcely support the conflict of mingled anxieties, desires and expectations. Meanwhile appearances are every week more favorable, the heavens are covered with clouds, and some drops have already fallen. Such are the circumstances in which I commence the ninth year of my ministry; and surely never did my situation call more loudly for fasting and prayer than now.

"In the preceding sketch of the past year I have said little of my own wickedness, or of God's goodness; for, indeed, I know not what to say. The simple statements which I have made of facts speak more loudly in favor of Christ, and against myself, than any thing else can do. I used to think that repentance and confession bore some small proportion to my sins; but now there seems to be no more proportion between them than between finite and infinite. I can see that I once trusted much to my repentance but now my repentance seems one of my worst sins, on account of its exceeding imperfection.

"For an hour or two I have enjoyed as much assistance as I usually do on such occasions; but I see more and more how exceedingly little there is of spirituality in my best affections. Imagination, natural affections, and self-love, compose by much the largest part of my experiences. Indeed, I can scarcely discover any thing else. It is like a fire just kindled; much smoke, some blaze, but little heat. I have been praying, more than I ever did before, for more *spiritual* affection and clearer views; but as yet my gracious God does not answer my request. But he knows best, and with him I can leave it.

"Was favored while reading Owen on the Hebrews, with new and unusually clear views of many things respecting our Savior's sufferings, which filled me with wonder and delight. O how little have I known, how little do I still know of the great mystery of godliness! In the evening hoped I felt something of what the apostle calls travailing in birth for souls. I was in such a state of mind as I cannot well describe, but it seemed to be almost insupportable.

"*Dec.* 17. Had a most sweet, refreshing season in prayer last night. The unsearchable riches seemed opened to me, to take as much as I pleased. Had great liberty in praying for a revival; and could scarcely give over the blessed work, though much exhausted. This morning was in the same frame. Was especially affected and delighted with the proof of love which he required from Peter, 'Feed my sheep.' Prayed that I might be enabled to feed them this day. Went to the house of God with more of such a frame as I wished than usual. I have hitherto had no liberty in praying for a revival in public. However much I might feel at home, it was taken from me as soon as I entered the meeting-house. But to-day my fetters were taken off. I could pray for nothing but a revival.

" *Dec.* 18. Felt unusually oppressed with a sense of the wisdom and grace necessary to conduct a revival; but was enabled to trust in God to supply my wants. Spent the evening with Christian friends. Prayed for a blessing on the visit, and found it a sweet season. After my return had a most refreshing and delightful season in prayer. Had no longer the least doubt of a revival, and my joy was unspeakable. Continued sweetly meditating and praying till I fell asleep.

" *Dec.* 19. New joys, new praises. Had a most ravishing view of Christ this morning, as coming at a distance in the chariot of his salvation. In an instant he was with me and around me; and I could only cry, Welcome! welcome! a thousand times welcome to my disconsolate heart, and to thy widowed church! O, joy unspeakable and full of glory!—while seeing him not, I feel and believe his presence. Spent the evening with the church, after much prayer, both alone and with others, that Christ would meet and bless us. Went to meeting trembling, and my fears were realized. I was entirely deserted, had nothing to say, and was obliged to leave them abruptly. They sat stupid awhile after I left them, and then separated. This was a sore trial. Impatience and self-will struggled hard for leave to say something against Christ; but I was enabled to flee to the throne of grace, and found relief. One thing is certain: I have no direct promise that there shall be a revival; but I have a thousand direct, positive assurances that Christ is faithful, and wise, and kind. This, therefore, faith will believe, whatever becomes of my hopes and wishes; and it is evidently absurd to profess to trust in God for what he has not expressly promised, while I do not believe his positive assurances.

"*Dec.* 24. Enjoyed great nearness to Christ in family prayer. Seemed to feel a perfect union with him, and to love with a most intense love every thing that is dear to him. Christians seemed inexpressibly dear to me, and I loved to pray for them as for myself. But, O, where have I been? and what have I been doing all my days? How terribly blind and ignorant of religion have I been! and *now* I know nothing, feel nothing as I ought. Saw that there is incomparably more to be known and felt in religion than I ever thought of before. What a pity that I have lost so many of the best years of my life in contented ignorance; and what would I not give for the years I have lost. I never can be humbled sufficiently for my indolence. As it respects a revival, I feel easy. My anxiety has subsided into a settled calm, arising from a full persuasion that Christ will come and save us.

"*Dec.* 30. Was greatly assisted in praying for a revival, and felt almost a full assurance that it would be granted. Felt sweetly melted, and almost overpowered with a sense of God's sovereign, unmerited love. Could not forbear saying to him that he ought not to save such a guilty creature; or, at least, ought not to employ me, and bless my labors; but he seemed to reply with great power and majesty, 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' Could not but submit that it should be so. Never did the sovereignty of God appear so sweet as then. Spent part of the evening in religious conversation with my domestics.

"*Jan.* 4, 1816. Preached the evening lecture without much sensible assistance. After meeting, one o the church informed me that in the afternoon a man, (who had formerly been one of the first merchants in town,) once a professor, but who has been for many years an apostate and bitter enemy to religion, came to him apparently much distressed respecting his sal vation; and that the same man was at lecture. This good news filled us with joy and triumph, so that all doubts of a revival seemed removed. O, I wanted, even then, to begin my eternal song; and excess of happiness became almost painful. Could scarcely sleep for joy, though much fatigued.

"*Jan.* 5. Had similar views and feelings this morning, but less vivid. Took a review of God's dealings with me, and of my own exercises respecting the revival. Saw infinite wisdom and goodness in every thing that God has done, and could not but admire and praise. As to my feelings, though they seemed little less than a mass of pride, and selfishness, and impatience, yet I could not but see that there was some real faith under all, which God had accepted. Afterwards, however, reflecting on the feelings of papists towards their saints, and pagans towards their idols, I was led to doubt whether I had exercised any real faith at all. Attended a fast. Endeavored to convince the church how polluted the conference-room must be in the sight of God, in consequence of the sins which had been committed there. Then made a confession of them, and prayed that it might be cleansed. Then did the same with respect to our closets, and houses, and afterwards the house of God, and the communion table. Then read and expounded the new covenant, and showed what was meant by taking hold of it. Finished by imploring all the blessings of this covenant on the church, and praying for a revival.

"*Jan.* 7. Sabbath. Had no freedom either in prayer or preaching, and the congregation appeared uncommonly stupid. Concluded that there was to be no revival under me. Was exceedingly distressed, but felt no disposition to murmur or be impatient. Withdrew to my chamber to weep and pray. It seemed clear that I was the great obstacle to a revival. I have not 'rendered again according to the benefit done unto me, but my heart has been lifted up; therefore is there wrath upon my people.' Threw myself in the dust at God's feet. Derived some comfort from often repeating those words, 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.' It seemed sweet as well as reasonable that God should be a sovereign, and do what he will with his own."

"*March* 1, 1816.

—— "Could I, my dear mother, tell you all the good news I have so long been waiting for, it would be some comfort; but I can say but little compared with what I hoped to be able to say before this time; nor can I yet determine how it will go with us. We have about eighty inquirers, and several, I hope, are converted; but this is nothing to what we expected.

However, we would be thankful for a drop if we cannot have a shower. It has been a trying season with me this winter. While pursuing the revival, it seemed as if I must die in the pursuit, and never overtake it."

"*April* 1, 1816.

—— "I am so worn down with constant cares and labors, that my affections seem to be all dried up, 'and I am withered like grass.' However, I hope you have received, ere this, a few lines as a proof that I have not quite forgotten or ceased to love my mother.

"Our revival still lingers: it, however, increases slowly. I have conversed with about forty who entertain hopes, and with about sixty more who are inquiring. Twenty-three have joined the church since the year commenced. The work is evidently not over; but whether it will prove general, is still doubtful. There is quite a revival at Bath, below us. Nearly two hundred have been awakened. In Philadelphia, seventy-one were added to a single church at one time, a few weeks since. In New-York and Baltimore, also, there are revivals. You have probably heard that there have been revivals among the Hottentots. Two hundred were added to the church in one year, and ten Hottentot preachers ordained. There is much more good news of a similar nature. Surely we live in a good day, and I believe you will yet see good days in Rindge. Their liberality in raising my father's salary is a token for good; and I rejoice in it more for that reason than for any other. Those who are most willing to pay for the Gospel, are most likely to have it blessed to them.

"We go on very happily in every respect. I have been favored with a long calm, or rather sunshine Every thing is easy; I am careful for nothing; Christ is so precious and so near; my cup runneth over. Every day I expect a storm, but it does not come. Doubtless I have many bitter, trying scenes to pass through yet; worse than any I have heretofore experienced. But I care not: He will carry me through. I wish to mention to you some passages which have been peculiarly sweet of late. One is this: 'He caused them to be pitied of all them by whom they were carried away captive.' Scarcely any passage of Scripture seems to me so expressive of God's goodness to his people as this. After they had provoked him till he banished them from the good land, still he pitied them, and made their enemies pity them. It sounds like David's language—'Deal gently with the young man Absalom for my sake.'

"Another is the account of our Savior's ascension, in the last chapter of Luke: 'And he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And *while* he blessed them,' &c. Observe, '*while* he blessed,' &c. The last thing he was ever seen to do on earth was to *bless* his disciples. He went up scattering blessings; and he has done nothing but bless them ever since."

"*Sept.* 19, 1816.

"I do not wonder at all, my dear mother, at your discovering, from my letters, the jaded, languid state of my mental faculties. They have long since lost all the elasticity which they ever possessed, and my mind is 'as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage.'

———"On the whole, the past summer has been the happiest which I have enjoyed since I was settled. Were it not for the dreadfully depressing effects of ill health, I should be almost too happy. It seems to me that no domestic troubles, not even the loss of wife and children, could disturb me much, might I enjoy such consolations as I have been favored with most of the time since the date of my last letter. Soon after that, the revival, which I feared was at an end, began again, and things now look as promising as ever. My meeting-house overflows, and some of the church are obliged to stay at home, on account of the impossibility of obtaining seats. I have, in the main, been favored with great liberty for me, both in the pulpit and out; and it has very often seemed as if —could I only drop the body—I could continue, without a moment's pause, to praise and adore to all eternity. This goodness is perfectly astonishing and incomprehensible. I am in a maze whenever I think of it. Every day, for years, I have been expecting some dreadful judgments, reckoning, as Hezekiah did, that as a lion God would break all my bones, and, from day even to night, make an end of me. Now, and now, I have said to myself, it is coming. Now, God will cast me out of his vineyard. Now, he will lay me aside or withdraw his Spirit, and let me fall into some great sin. But, instead of the judgments which I expected and deserve, he sends nothing but mercies; such great mercies too, that I absolutely stagger under them, and all my words are swallowed up.

"But, great as my reasons are to love God for his favors, methinks he is infinitely more precious on account of his perfections. Never did he appear so inexpressibly glorious and lovely as he has for some weeks past. He is, indeed, all in all. I have nothing to fear nothing to hope from creatures. They are all mere shadows and puppets. There is only one *Being* in the universe, and that Being is God; may I add, He is *my* God. I long to go and see him in heaven. I long still more to stay and serve him on earth. Rather I rejoice to be just where he pleases, and to be what he pleases. Never did selfishness and pride appear so horrid. Never did I see myself to be such a monster; so totally dead to all wisdom and goodness. But I can point up and say—There is my righteousness, my wisdom, my all. In the hands of Christ I lie passive and helpless, and am astonished to see how he can work in me. He does all; holds me up, carries me forward, works in me and by me; while I do nothing, and yet never worked faster in my life. To say all in a word—'My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me.'

"Our inquirers are about seventy. We are building a conference-house, to hold five hundred people. Some of the church, who can ill afford it, give fifty dollars each towards it."

"*December* 9, 1816.

"In a religious view, things remain very much as they have been. We have about fifty inquirers; but they do not seem, except in a few instances, to be very deeply impressed, and their progress is slow. We have admitted seventy-two persons into the church during the present year. Our new conference-house has been finished some weeks. At its dedication, and at a quarterly fast held in it the same week, we enjoyed the divine presence in a greater degree, I think, than we ever did before as a church. I would not have given a straw for the additional proof which a visible appearance of Christ would have afforded of his presence. And he has been wonderfully gracious to me ever since. It is several months since I have been disturbed with any of those dreadful conflicts which for so many years rendered life bitterer than wormwood and gall.

"We have received intelligence of E.'s marriage. can realize more than I once could, what a severe trial it must be to you and my father to have both daughters gone—almost like burying them. If my father were not a minister, and thus *fixed* where he is, I should send him and you such an invitation as Joseph sent to Jacob, to come and let us nurse and nourish you, since you are left so much alone."

"*December* 16, 1817.

"This being the anniversary of my ordination, determined to spend it in fasting and prayer. Had little courage to attempt it, on account of bodily infirmities and repeated vain attempts; but God was gracious to me, and enabled me to go through with it. Had for a long time a melting, heart-broken frame at the feet of Christ, weeping aloud, and obtained a full and sweet assurance of pardon. Never before enjoyed such a sense of his love, or felt so constrained to love him and every thing that belonged to him, especially his Word, which I could not forbear kissing and pressing to my bosom. Was perfectly willing to die without leaving my chamber, if my work here were done and God saw best.

"*Dec.* 18. Began to think last night that I have been sleeping all my days; and this morning felt sure of it. I have been idling and sleeping while my flock have been dropping into hell. How astonishingly blind have I been, and how imperceptible my religious progress! Prayed for my people with more of a right spirit than perhaps ever before. After meeting had for a few moments such a view of God as almost overwhelmed me. Could not have supported it long."

" *October* 27, 1818.

—— "In addition to these favors, we have some reason to hope that Zion is travailing in birth with souls. After a long season the preached word begins again to be blessed; and several have within a few days been awakened. My health too, which for several weeks was worse than ever, is now quite as good as usual; and God has been so gracious to me in spiritual things, that I thought he was preparing me for L.'s death. Indeed it may be so still; but if so, his will be done. David's charge to his soul, 'wait thou *only* upon God,' has of late seemed peculiarly precious. Let him take all; if he leaves us himself, we still have all and abound. I tell my dear parents of these mercies, because I know they are in answer to your prayers, and because I trust they will cause you abound in thanksgiving in my behalf.

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"Since I wrote the above I have seen three more newly awakened; and other circumstances appear encouraging. Truly my cup runs over with blessings. I can still scarcely help thinking that God is preparing me for some severe trial; but if he will grant me his presence, as he does now, no trial can seem severe. However, I desire to rejoice with trembling. I seem to know a little what is meant by fearing the Lord and his *goodness.* There seems to be something awful and venerable even in the goodness of God, when displayed towards creatures so desperately wicked, so inexpressibly vile as we are. O, could I now drop the body, I could stand and cry to all eternity, without being weary—God is holy, God is just, God is good; God is wise, and faithful, and true. Either of his perfections alone is sufficient to furnish matter for an eternal, unwearied song. How bright, how dazzling is the *pure, unsullied whiteness of his character!* and how black, how loathsome do we appear in contrast with it! Could I sing upon paper, I should 'break forth into singing;' for day and night I can do nothing but sing. 'Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds; for the Lord shall reign King for ever, and thy God, O Zion, throughout all generations.'"

"*April* 18, 1820.

"I have lately been very much delighted with some account of the last years of Mr. Newton. Nothing that I have yet met with seems to come so near complete ripeness of Christian character as the views and feelings which he expresses in his daily conversation. He seems to have seen God continually in every thing to have been wholly swallowed up in him, and to have regarded him as all in all. The whole creation seemed, as it were, to be annihilated in his view, and God to have taken its place. If a miracle had been wrought before me to prove the reality of religion, it could scarcely have produced conviction like that which resulted from seeing religion thus gloriously exemplified. After his faculties seemed to be almost extinct, so that he could not remember, in the afternoon, having preached in the morning, faith and love and hope were as strong as ever. Indeed, I cannot conceive of nearer approaches to perfection in this world than he seems to have made during the last years of his life. He says that God works in his people, *to will* first, and afterwards *to do;* and thinks that Christians *will* to do good many years before they actually *do* much. This is encouraging. I think God works in me to will; but in *doing*, my progress is small indeed."

"*May* 17, 1821.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"Ill news flies so fast, and becomes so much exaggerated in its progress, that I should not wonder if you were to hear a rumor that I am dying, if not dead. The truth is, I have been sick—perhaps dangerously so. About three months since I began to be troubled with a slight cough. It gradually grew worse, and was attended with loss of appetite, pain in the chest, difficulty of breathing, daily accession of fever, and spitting of blood. It is nearly a month since I have been obliged to give up preaching, and have recourse to emetics, blistering, bleeding, &c. By the blessing of God attending these means I am now almost well again, and hope to be able soon to resume my labors. I am, however, still weak, and cannot write much; but I was fearful you would hear that I am worse than I really am, and therefore thought it best to write a few lines."

"*June* 8. This is a most melancholy day to me. It is the Sabbath on which we should have had the communion; but we have no one to preach for us. My flock are scattered, and I can only look on and groan. My health is in such a state that I can feel nothing but misery. However, this blow seemed to touch me. I *saw* that it was just, though I can scarcely be said to have *felt* it. To-morrow I expect to sail for Charleston, with a view to the recovery of my health; but I go with a heavy heart. There appears little prospect of its proving beneficial.

"*July* 16.

"I am just returned from Charleston. My health is much improved. I had a very pleasant passage out; but a most tedious and unpleasant return. The captain who carried me out was as kind as possible. I hope he has his reward. He offered to carry me to Europe, and bring me back. It would have been gratifying to see Old England; but I could not spare the time.

"*July* 16. O how much better is God to me than my fears, and even than my hopes! how ready to answer prayer! This afternoon he has banished my fears and sorrows, strengthened my faith, revived my hopes, and encouraged me to go on. Had a precious season in visiting and praying with some of my people, and still more so in the evening. O how wise and good is God! Now I can see it was best that I should not be assisted in preaching yesterday; for it drove me, in self-despair to the throne of grace. Whereas, had I been assisted, I might have remained at a distance. And I desire to record it to the honor of God and my own shame, that I never went to him in distress, without finding almost immediate relief.

"*July* 25. This day I am thirty-eight years old. I had intended to make it a day of family thanksgiving, but my weakness prevented. Indeed, ill health is an obstacle continually in my way, almost wholly obstructing my usefulness and growth in grace. Half my time I am so languid in body and mind that I can do nothing; and the other half I am very far from being well. But God has hitherto graciously supported me, so that, though cast down, I am not yet destroyed. As to resolving that I will do better in future, I have no courage to do it. The loss of so many years withers my strength and courage, and dries up my spirits."

"*August* 6, 1821.

"Since I wrote last there has been quite a change in me. Then my health was better, but my mind sick. Now my mind is comparatively at ease, but my health has sunk down nearly to its old standard. However, this state is vastly more comfortable than the former, and I desire to be satisfied. I think, my dear mother, you may dismiss all anxiety respecting me. I am in wise and good hands, and do not suffer more than is absolutely necessary."

"*Sept.* 1. While lying awake last night enjoyed most delightful views of God as a Father. Felt that my happiness is as dear to him as to myself; that he would not willingly hurt one hair of my head, nor let me suffer a moment's unnecessary pain. Felt that he was literally as willing to give as I could be to ask. Seemed, indeed, to have nothing to ask for."

In a letter, dated September 10th, after alluding to "sore trials," and especially to one of several events which had a most melancholy and disastrous aspect on the religious prospects of the church, he says, "This, coming just when we were expecting a revival, was peculiarly grievous; but I still hope, after God has crushed us into the dust he will exalt us. He has been most wonderfully gracious to me during these trials. Never before have I enjoyed such consolations. It seems as evident as noon-day, that the same love which prompted the Savior to bear the curse for us, would have led him to bear all our afflictions for us, were it not absolutely necessary that we should suffer in our own persons. I see, I feel that he would as soon wound the apple of his eye as give one of his people a moment's needless pain. I care not what trials may come, for I know that they will be for my good, and that he will support me."

At the commencement at Bowdoin College this month, he received the degree of Doctor in Divinity; but writes to his mother—"I beg you not to address your letters to me by that title, for I shall never make use of it."

"*Sept.* 19. Last night, while lying awake, had more distinct apprehensions of God's greatness than at any previous time. Realized little of any thing else except simple greatness; and this, although I seemed to have no views compared with what might be, almost crushed me to death. I could not move a limb, nor scarcely breathe. Saw how easily a little view of God might destroy us. Could realize more than ever that a clear view of God must be hell to the wicked; for had any sense of his anger accompanied this view of his greatness, I could not have supported it.

"*Oct.* 11. Still my cup runs over with blessings. God graciously continues to grant me his presence when I lie down and when I rise up; though he every day sees enough in me to justify him in leaving me for ever."

"*October* 15.

—— "God continues to be wonderfully gracious to me in spiritual things. I know not what it means. I never was so happy for so long a time before. I suspect some grievous trial is approaching. Let it come if God pleases. While he is with me I feel entirely independent of all circumstances, creatures, and events. Yet creature comforts are pleasant, when we can enjoy God in them.

"I fear —— —— will do the church little good. At first it seemed to affect them in a proper manner, but the impression is fast wearing away. Whether God will scourge them still more severely, or whether he will come and melt them into repentance by unexpected displays of mercy, I do not know. If I could see them made to feel what a God Jehovah is, and what a Savior Christ is, and what a place heaven is! But I do not. Still, when I look at God in Christ, and see how good, how gracious, how condescending, how powerful he is, I am compelled, in spite of myself, to hope, and almost to feel sure that I shall, sooner or later, see a revival of religion here. It may be, however, that this bright day is designed only to prepare me for as dark a night. But I desire to do present duty, to enjoy with humble gratitude present happiness, and let to-morrow take thought for itself."

"*November* 25.

—— "A young man, member of our church, is just settled, and a revival has commenced. About fifty are awakened, and the work is increasing. He makes the fourth member of our church who has been settled since I came here." [Dr. Payson superintended the preparation of several young men for the ministry.]

"*February* 3, 1822.

—— "If my letter takes its complexion from my feelings, it will appear gloomy indeed. Since I wrote last it has been a season of trial with me. E. has had a terrible abscess, which we feared would prove too much for her slender constitution. We were almost worn out with watching; and, just as she began to amend, I was seized with a violent ague in my face, which gave me incessant anguish for six days and nights, and deprived me almost entirely of sleep. Three nights I did not once close my eyes. When almost distracted with pain and loss of sleep, Satan was let loose upon me to buffet me, and I verily thought would have driven me to desperation and madness. Nor is my situation now much better. The fact is, my nervous system, at all times weak, has been so shattered by pain, and watching, and strong opiates, which gave no relief, that I am sunk in gloom and despondency, and can only write bitter things against myself. Surely no one suffers so much unprofitable misery as I do. I call it unprofitable, because it is of such a nature that I do not see how it possibly can produce any good effect. It only weakens, dispirits, and discourages me.

"We have had a few instances of conviction, and at least one of conversion, since I wrote last; and the church, I hope, is gaining ground. You will be glad to hear that eight or ten are awakened in Gorham."

"*February* 5.

"I can now write in a less dismal strain. I am not happy, but I am less wretched. I feel that while such a creature as I am is out of hell, I have great reason for thankfulness. But my flesh trembles and my blood almost runs cold, when I look back upon what I have suffered. Certainly a very large proportion of my path lies through the valley of the shadow of death. Bishop Hall says—'None out of hell have suffered so much as some of God's children;' and I believe it. I should not, however, much regard my sufferings, if they were sanctified."

"*February* 19.

"You will be glad, my dear mother, to hear that the man who had the legion is sitting at the feet of Jesus, in his right mind. I had obtained some relief when I wrote you last, but it proved of short continuance; the clouds returned after the rain, and I was again in the horrible pit and miry clay, and there remained till the next Sabbath. But now, I trust, the devil is cast out, though, as he departed from our Savior only for a season, I know not how soon he may return. You know Mr. Newton thinks, that, comparatively speaking, he fights with neither small nor great, except with ministers. I know not how this may be; but if he torments others as he does me, I am sure I pity them. I am now so worn out with suffering and conflict that I seem incapable of enjoyment but I feel quiet and peaceful, and that is a great mercy.

"The symptoms of a revival increase among us. Perhaps a dozen have been awakened and three have obtained hope since I wrote last. I was sent for to-day to see a man ninety-two years old, who, after a long life of sin, is awakened in his old age. His situation, on the whole, seems encouraging, though he is nearly blind and deaf."

"*February* 26.

"The revival has been advancing, and there now seems to be every reason to hope that God has begun a great work among us. I would not be too sanguine, but things look more favorable than they have for seven or eight years. Every day I have two, and three, and four inquirers to see me, and their convictions are very deep and pungent. Three have just obtained hope.

"I rejoice the more in this work, because it enables me to stop the mouth of my old adversary, and to prove to his face that he is a liar. I could not doubt that I had been enabled to pray for a revival these many years. Nor could I persuade myself that Christ had not promised it to me. The essence of a promise consists in voluntarily exciting expectations of some benefit. In this sense, a revival had often been promised to me. And when it was not granted; when, one time after another, promising appearances died away; and especially when I was left to such exercises as rendered it impossible that I should be favored with a revival—Satan had a fine opportunity to work upon my unbelief, and to ask, Where is your

God? what do you get by praying to him? and where is the revival which he has been so long encouraging you to expect, and to pray for? Now I can answer these questions triumphantly, and put the lying tongue to silence. But the work is all God's; and I stand and look on to see him work; and this is favor enough, and infinitely more than I deserve.

"You spoke in your last of poor ——. Rich, you would call him now, if you could see him. He has made more progress in religion since ——, than he would in twenty years of ordinary advancement. I feel like a child when talking with him. Truly God's ways are not like ours. Meanwhile poor brother R. who is not half so undeserving of a revival as I am, is laid aside just as soon as favorable symptoms begin to appear. His physicians speak very discouragingly."

"*March* 7. Preached in the evening to the largest assembly that I had ever addressed at a Thursday lecture. Came home encouraged, and rejoicing in God. The work is his—I am nothing, and love to be nothing. Dare not promise to serve God more faithfully. However extensive a revival he may send, I shall again be stupid and ungrateful, unless he prevent."

"*March* 17.

"The revival goes on. Fifteen, we hope, are converted; and four times that number under deep impressions. But in the midst of it I am laid aside. My lungs have been failing for several weeks, and I can preach no longer. After my last Thursday lecture I had a strange turn. Every body thought I was dying. It was occasioned by an inability in the heart to free itself from the blood which poured in upon it. However, the doctor came, and took a large quantity of blood, which relieved me. But I am just as I was last spring, and unless God interposes to help me, shall be unable to preach for weeks. You may well suppose that this is a trying dispensation; but so far I am kept quiet under it. I feel that it is not only just, but wise and kind. Poor brother Rand is in the same situation. The revival among his people increases, but he can do nothing. I wish P. was here; we both need him."

"*May* 20, 1823.

—— "Cæsar, speaking of one of his many battles which was severely contested, observed that on former occasions he had fought for victory, but then he fought for life. Even so it is with me. Once I fought for victory, and no ordinary victory would satisfy me; but my strength, and courage, and ambition are now so crushed, that I fight merely for life, and I am scarcely able to secure even that. Still I hope for victory ultimately. I have just finished a sermon on Hezekiah's petition—'O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.' It has given me some comfort; it ought to give me more. Indeed, if we properly considered who Christ is, and what he has undertaken to do for us, we should never need consolation, but might, like St. Paul, though sorrowful, be always rejoicing; and say with him—'Blessed be God, who hath blessed us with *all spiritual blessings* in heavenly things in Christ Jesus.' I have prepared another sermon from a succeeding passage in the same chapter—'Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption.' The words 'delivered it' are not in the original; and as Father Henry observes, the passage may be read—'Thou hast loved my soul from the pit of corruption; thou hast loved my soul when it was in the pit of corruption, and thou hast loved it out of the pit of corruption; not merely taken it out, and redeemed it out, but *loved it out.*'"

"*May* 25.

"My sermon on Christ's undertaking for us does me more and more good. I wish I could impart to you some of the comfort which it gives me. I wish to get away from frames and feelings, and live continually on the precious truth—'Christ has undertaken for me.' He is able, he is faithful, he will keep what he has undertaken to keep, he will do all he has undertaken to do. Another passage has been very sweet to me this morning, and I think I shall preach upon it next Sabbath:—'He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.' To be accepted of God, to be accepted in his beloved Son—what an honor! what a privilege! Well may it be said to every one who enjoys it, 'Go thy way eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now *accepteth* thy works.'

"Our church began last winter to employ a domestic missionary. They sent him to a town which has long been without a minister, and where, just before a vain attempt had been made to raise one hundred dollars to pay for preaching. His labors produced such effect, that they have now raised a fund which will support a minister for ever. They have also given our missionary a unanimous call to settle with them We shall make a similar experiment in another town as soon as we can find a suitable missionary. How much is money worth at such a time as this !"

Dr. Payson describes a species of trial to which he was twice subjected, that will probably, at the first glance, surprise those who were acquainted with his strong confidence in revelation, and his rich experience in the consolations of religion. It shows most vividly the awful malice of the "accuser of the brethren," whose power to distress Christians, as well as his agency among "the children of disobedience," is greatly underrated at the present day; as even his existence is extensively doubted. Against the servant of God, who was making such inroads upon his kingdom, he seems to have directed all his "fiery darts." They gave temporary pain, but inflicted no mortal wound. The adversary was foiled.

"*December* 5, 1823.

—— "I have been sick, and laid by from preaching on thanksgiving day and two Sabbaths, but am now able to resume my labors. But O the temptations which have harassed me for the last three months! I have met with nothing like them in books. I dare not mention them to any mortal, lest they should trouble him as they have troubled me; but, should I become an apostate and write against religion, it seems to me that I could bring forward objections which would shake the faith of all the Christians in the world. What I marvel at is, that the arch-deceiver has never been permitted to suggest them to some of his scribes, and have them published. They would, or I am much mistaken, make fearful work with Christians for a time, though God would, doubtless, enable them to overcome in the end. It seems to me that my state has been far worse than that of Mansoul was when Diabolus and his legions broke into the town. They could not get into the castle, the heart; but my castle was full of them. But do not be troubled for me; I am now better. Let me then try to comfort my mother."

The other passage, depicting a similar conflict, was written about a year and a half after the above:

" It seems to me that those who die young, like Brainerd and Martyn, know almost nothing of the difficulty of persevering in the Christian race. My difficulties increase every year. All the atheistical, deistical, and heretical objections which I meet with in books, are childish babblings, compared with those which Satan suggests, and which he urges upon the mind with a force which seems irresistible. Yet I am often obliged to write sermons, and to preach, when these objections beat upon me like a whirlwind, and almost distract me. When he asks, as he does continually ask, What have you gained by all your prayers? I know not what to reply. However, pray I must, and, God assisting me, pray I will. The way is indeed difficult, but I can devise no other which is not more so. There is no one to whom I can go if I forsake Christ."

These last quoted passages are adapted, not to raise doubts respecting the genuineness and authenticity of revelation, but to strengthen our confidence in it as the *sure word of God which endureth for ever.* The obvious and legitimate inference from them is, that the Bible can sustain, uninjured, attacks and objections more formidable than any which have been directed against it by the mightiest infidels.

"*Jan.* 1, 1824. Rose early, and tried to pray; but a weak, languid frame crushed me down. I have, however, reason to bless God that he allows such a wretch as I am to serve him at all. Groaned and struggled with my weakness before God. Read a number of passages in my diary, especially what is recorded under date of Dec. 16, 1815. Am glad I kept a journal; I had otherwise forgotten much of what I have done against God, and of what he has done for me. Was confounded at what I read. My words are swallowed up. My life, my ministry has been madness, madness! What shall I do? where shall I hide? To sin, after I had sinned so much, and after I had been forgiven! But I cannot write! I cannot think! And if my sins appear so black in my book, how must they appear in God's!

"*Jan.* 29. Have had much to be thankful for, and much to be ashamed of for some days past. God has been more than ordinarily gracious to me, granting me liberty of access to him in prayer, and permitting me to be in some degree useful. I have received many tokens of warm affection from his people, and been assisted in my work. . . . Have learned a lesson which I ought to have learned before. I am religiously romantic. I am always expecting something out of the common course, and planning what God is going to do.

"*May* 15. Rode to G. to give them a day's preaching, as they are destitute. Took up a poor cripple by the way, and preached Christ to him. Felt some pity and love for him while talking. A curious combination of circumstances threw him in my way. Could not but think how we both should admire the leadings of Providence, if he should be converted in consequence of what was said to him.

"*July* 20. Perplexed what to do. My people wish me to go to Europe. Tried to commit the case to God.

"*Oct.* 17. Slept none last night, and my sufferings were great. My right arm seems about to perish. Could say, God's will be done.

"*Nov.* 7. What I have long feared has come upon me. My voice and my faculties are half gone already, and what remains is rapidly departing.

"*Nov.* 27. Was favored with a most precious season in prayer. Had such views of God and Christ! Lay and mourned at his feet till I was exhausted, and longed unutterably to be more holy, and to have others holy. O what reason have I to bless God for this!

"*Jan.* 5, 1825. At the concert on Monday recommended to the church to imitate the Lord's prayer, and always begin their supplication with praying that God's name may be glorified. Have derived much benefit from pursuing this practice. Made eleven visits, and felt thankful for having strength to do it.

"*Jan.* 31. Felt very happy and dead to the world all day. Rejoiced in God, and cared not what he did with me.

"*Feb.* 9. Had a delightful season in prayer. It seemed as if it was only to ask and receive. Had nothing to ask for myself, except that I might be swallowed up in the will of God.

"*Feb.* 15 16. Much engaged in visiting. Went to the utmost extent of my strength. Felt insatiable desires for more holiness."

" *Boston, March* 21, 1825.

MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I value your letters much, and your prayers still more; and sometimes think that your life is preserved principally, to pray for your children. It will be found, I doubt not, in the coming world, that ministers had much less share in the success which attends their labors, than is now supposed. It will be found, that if they drew the bow, the prayers of Christians pointed and guided the arrow. I preached last evening to an immense concourse of people. After the pews were filled, seats were brought in and placed in all the aisles. So far as I know, however, very little good has been done by my labors here. But I desire to leave it all with God. I am astonished and ashamed by the kindness with which his people here treat me. * *

"You express a wish that my feelings were more equable. I wish they were. But I am so completely wretched when God withdraws from me, that the removal of that wretchedness by his return renders me almost too happy. This thought has lately been of some service to me. Every Christian ought to love God in proportion to what has been forgiven him. But every Christian knows more evil of himself than he can know of any other human being. He ought, therefore, to feel as if more had been forgiven him, and as if he were under greater obligations to love God than any other human being; as if it were worse for him to sin against God than it would be for any other."

"*Portland, July* 27.

——"I had attempted to observe my birth-day as a day of prayer, but apparently to no purpose. I was so unwell that I could do nothing. However, the next day, the blessings which I wished to ask for, but could not, were bestowed. I need not tell you how sweet, how soothing, how refreshing Christ's returning presence is, after long absence. Still I am borne down in such a manner by ill health that I can but half rejoice. The state of religion among us helps also to crush me. There never has been so entire a suspension of divine influences since my settlement as at present. Those of the church who are most spiritual tell me that they never found it so difficult to perform religious duties as they do now. In fine, the church seems to be on Bunyan's enchanted ground, and many of them are sleeping in some of the arbors which he mentions. Whether they will wake before death, seems doubtful."

"*September* 29.

——"I preached last Sabbath on being guilty of the blood of souls; and endeavored to point out some of the ways in which we may incur this guilt. I have incurred but too much of it; and it lies upon me with a weight which I know not how to bear, but which I cannot throw off. True, blood has been shed for us, which has efficacy to take away the guilt of blood. But though this consideration may keep us from despair, it cannot shield us, or, at least, cannot shield one whose guilt is like mine, from the sufferings occasioned by self-reproach and a wounded spirit. I seldom think of the time I spent in B. without a pang the keenness of which you cannot easily conceive. It is a painful thought that we are so long in learning how to live, that ere the lesson is well learned life is spent. Another subject on which I have lately been writing, and which has assisted to increase my depression, was suggested by the passage—'Even Christ pleased not himself.' If any one who ever lived in this world had a right to please himself, he surely had such a right; yet how far was he from exercising or claiming it! He evidently adopted and acted upon the principle, that as man, he was not his own; that he belonged to God and to the universe, and that he must do nothing merely for the sake of promoting his own personal gratification. I contemplate this example with feelings similar to those with which a child who has just begun to hold a pen, may be supposed to look upon a superb copper-plate, which he is required to imitate; or rather with such feelings as one might indulge who had been learning to write for many years, and yet found himself further from resembling his copy than he was at first."

"*Nov.* 4. Quarterly fast. Went to meeting feeling very unwell, and found very few assembled. Was obliged to wait half an hour before there was a sufficient number to sing. Was entirely overcome by discouragement. Could not say a word, and after struggling in vain with my feelings, was obliged to state them to the church and come away.

"*Nov.* 9. Installation of a minister over the Third Church to-day. Have reason to be thankful that I have been carried through this business of separation so well, and that affection for those who have left us is rather increased than diminished."

This last date brings us down to a period from which his health may be said to have been constantly declining. The progress of the maladies which were wasting away his frame may have been *stayed* for a few days or weeks in succession after this, but their hold on him was never more weakened. The winter succeeding was one of infirmity and suffering. He continued to preach on the Sabbath; but the exhaustion consequent upon the exertion often rendered it difficult for him to reach his home, distant but a few rods. So much overcome was he as to be physically unable to lead the devotions of his own family; and his Sabbath nights were nights of restlessness and anguish. Still, when holy time again returned he longed for the habitation of God's house, and again repeated his efforts, and with similar consequences.

Observing with alarm this prostration of his strength, his people, in the spring of 1826, resolved upon an alteration of their meeting-house, with a view to his relief. The ceiling was brought down and arched, and the floor inclined towards the pulpit, by which changes more than one third of the space to be filled by the speaker's voice was excluded, and the difficulty of filling it diminished in a still greater proportion. It was while this alteration was in progress that he made his circuitous and last journey to the Springs, which has already been mentioned.

On arriving there he said to Mr. W. in allusion to his health—"I am in pursuit of a good which is constantly flying before me, and which, I apprehend, will for ever elude my grasp."—"The incessant and unremitted labor of years," adds Mr. W. "seemed to have left him but a *mere wreck of being*, which he longed to be rid of to serve God in a region of perfect health and boundless activity. He had little expectation of recovering his health, and several times remarked that if it was the will of God to take him away speedily, it was no matter how soon he departed. The idea of wearing out his days in a state of inactivity and consequent depression was distressing to him, and made him deeply solicitous to have the question of life and death fully settled. Sometimes, said he, when I retire to bed I should be happy to have it the last night of my life. With Job he might say—"I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me. When I lie down I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day! When I say, My bed shall comfort me, and my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me with night visions; so that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life. I loathe it; I would not live alway."

Mr. W—— imagined—and in this he was unquestionably correct—that the sufferings of Dr. Payson were greater than any one knew or suspected; and he adds, "they were endured, for the most, *in silence.* At midnight he would arise and walk his room, singing some plaintive air. At first I knew not what to make of the unwonted and mournful sounds which broke in upon my slumbers; and often, as the sound softly died away, my soul was filled with sadness. He complained much of *his head.* In one conversation he dwelt particularly on the causes which had operated to undermine and destroy his health. Among them was his great and increasing anxiety for a general and powerful revival of religion among his people; his incessant labors to secure so great a blessing, and the repeated disappointments he had experienced from year to year. We would seem, said Dr. Payson, to be on the eve of an extensive revival, and my hopes would be correspondently raised; and then the favorable appearances would vanish away. Under the powerful excitement of hope, and under the succeeding depression arising from disappointment, my strength failed, and I sunk rapidly under my labors. He spoke of having been under a temptation, constantly, to labor beyond his strength; and believed many a faithful minister had thus been tempted by Satan to cut short his days. In this way his own life had been shortened. When, in a season of excitement, he had exhausted his whole strength, even then Satan suggested that he had not done enough, but must do much more, or be counted unfaithful."

This ceaseless anxiety for a revival appears the more remarkable, when contemplated in connection with the fact that the church was continually growing under his ministrations, and the congregation enlarging, till there was not room enough to receive them. In one year of his ministry the church received an accession of seventy-three, and in the year of his death seventy-nine; and the average number was more than thirty-five a year during the whole of his ministry. If there were an entire suspension of divine influences at any time, it was of temporary duration. Judging from the accessions made to the church, there must have been a constant and gradual work of God. If the term of his ministry be divided into periods of five years, the number added in each period differs from that of every other period by a comparatively small number. The difference is in favor of the first two periods, when, with fewer bodily infirmities, he "ceased not daily, and from house to house, to testify repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

About mid-summer he returned from his last excursion abroad to the bosom of his family and flock, and continued to employ the little strength which remained in making known Jesus Christ, and him crucified. From this labor no entreaties could prevail with him to desist. He continued to occupy his pulpit on the Sabbath, for the most part, through the following winter; notwithstanding parts of his body, particularly his right arm, had already begun to perish, and were not only useless, but an incumbrance. But while "the outward man decayed, the inward man was renewed day by day." This is in a degree true of his mental faculties, as well as of his religious progress. The coruscations of his intellect delighted and astonished his visiters. Among these was the Secretary of the American Education Society, who, asking Dr. Payson for a message which he might carry from him to beneficiaries, received the following impromptu:

"What if God should place in your hand a diamond, and tell you to inscribe on it a sentence which should be read at the last day, and shown there as an index of your own thoughts and feelings? What care, what caution would you exercise in the selection! Now, this is what God has done. He has placed before you immortal minds, more imperishable than the diamond on which you are about to inscribe, every day and every hour, by your instructions, by your spirit, or by your example, something which will remain, and be exhibited for or against you at the judgment day."

We shall close our extracts, and this chapter, with two short letters to his mother, the last he ever wrote

"*February* 1, 1827.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I have just received your letter, and though I am obliged to write with my left hand, and that is numb, I must try to scratch a few lines in reply. I am no better; am tolerably contented and happy, but have not much sensible consolation. We have increasing evidence that L. is become pious; but E. who seemed to be awakened, has lost his impressions. You have probably heard that Mr. R. hopes that H. is converted. We have about a dozen hopeful converts, and appearances are encouraging. I have much to be thankful for. Wife, children and people, all try to minister to my comfort. I rejoice to hear that your mind is in so desirable a frame, though I expected no less. God has not led you so far to forsake you at last. Should you be taken away before me I shall feel as Elisha did when he lost Elijah: for I doubt not your prayers have been of great service to me. I received a letter from G. lately, inviting me to come and spend part of the winter at New-York. I thank him, but I cannot come. Home is the only place for a cripple, who can neither dress nor undress himself; besides, I can be of some service to my people while here. I have many things to say, but writing is so wearisome and painful that I can add nothing more. Assure G. and E. of my warmest love, and believe me

"Your affectionate son"

"*February* 20.

'MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I wrote the inclosed letter three weeks since, and sent it by a man who said he was going to New-York; but after I hoped it had arrived there, it came back to me again. I have just received your last letter, and what shall I say in reply? If my hand would permit I could say much; if my health would allow of it, I would come and see you. As it is, I can only say God be with you, my dear mother, and bless you, as he has made you a blessing to me. If it be his will that we should not meet again in this world, I must say—Farewell, for a short time; for short, I trust, will be the time before we meet again. Farewell, then, my dear, dear mother! for a short time, farewell!"

It proved to be the last farewell. His mother, a few days afterwards, was called to her eternal home.

CHAPTER XX

His last labors—His spiritual joys, heavenly counsels, and brightening intellect, during the progress of his disease—His triumphant death.

DR. PAYSON was at length compelled to yield to the irresistible power of disease. Parts of his body, including his right arm and left side, were very singularly affected. They were incapable of motion, and lost all sense of feeling externally; while, in the interior parts of the limbs thus affected, he experienced, at intervals, a most intense *burning* sensation, which he compared to a stream of fused metal or liquid fire coursing through his bones. No external applications were of the least service; and in addition to his acute sufferings from this source, he was frequently subject to most violent attacks of nervous head-ache.

It was with great reluctance that he relinquished preaching. "The spirit continued willing" long after the "flesh failed." But who can resist the appointment of Heaven! The decree had gone forth that he must die; and the progress of his complicated maladies declared but too unequivocally that the decree must soon be executed. He did not, however, cease preaching at once, but at first secured assistance for half the day only. An arrangement to this effect, which was expected to continue several weeks, commenced on the second Sabbath of March. He occupied the pulpit in the morning. His text was, "*The word of the Lord is tried.*" The sermon was not written, of course; but no one that he ever wrote, not even his celebrated discourse on the Bible, was more instructive and eloquent than this; particularly those parts in which he described the trials to which "*the word of the Lord*" had been subjected by its enemies, and the tests of a different character which it had sustained from its friends. Never scarcely were the mightiest infidels made to appear so puny, insignificant, and foolish. "He who sitteth in the heavens" could almost be seen "deriding them." When describing the manner in which Christians had *tried* it, he "spoke out of the abundance of his heart." Experience aided his eloquence, and added strength to the conviction which it wrought. And it would have been listened to with a still greater intenseness of interest, had his own trials, mentioned in the preceding chapter, been known. The application of the subject to his auditory must be left for imagination to supply; for it cannot be conveyed on paper.

On pronouncing the blessing, he requested the congregation to resume their seats. He descended from the pulpit and took his station in front of it, and commenced a most solemn appeal to the assembly. He began with a recognition of that feeling in an auditory which leads them to treat a minister's exhortations as if they were merely a discharge of professional duty, by one placed above them and having little sympathy with them. "I now put aside the minister," said he; "I come down among you; place myself on a visible equality; I address you as a fellow-man, a friend, a brother, and fellow-traveler to the bar of God; as one equally interested with yourselves in the truths which I have been declaring." He then gave vent to the struggling emotions of his heart in a strain of affectionate entreaty, expressing the most anxious desires for their salvation. In conclusion, he referred them to the common practice, when men have any great object to accomplish, of assembling together and adopting resolutions expressive of their convictions and purposes; and he wished his hearers to follow him in a series which he was about to propose; and to adopt them, not by any visible act or expression, but mentally, if they thought them of sufficient importance, and could do it sincerely. One resolution expressed a conviction of the truth of the Bible; another, of criminal indifference to its momentous disclosures; another acknowledged the claims of Jehovah; another, the paramount importance of attention to the concerns of the soul; and another, the purpose to seek its salvation without delay. Though his withered arm hung helpless by his side, yet he seemed "instinct with life;" and every successive resolution was rendered emphatic by a gesture of the left.

In all his public ministrations during this period, when his body was sinking towards the grave, there was a singular adaptedness of truth to existing circumstances. The subjects upon which he expatiated were in unison with his condition as a servant of God ripening fast for heaven. There was much of the nature of testimony for God. He omitted no opportunity public or private, to maintain the honor and perfections of Him whose ambassador he was. He could scarcely utter a word without rendering it obvious to all who heard him, that God was higher in his esteem than any, than all created beings. One illustration of this statement was afforded by a sermon which he preached as late as the last Sabbath in April, from 2 Samuel, 18 : 3—"*Thou art worth ten thousand of us.*" Parts of this sermon are reported from recollection by his eldest daughter, who has been the most successful—where all fail—in retaining his characteristic expressions.

The text, which was addressed to David by his subjects, Dr. Payson applied to Jehovah, and illustrated its truth in this application by a variety of methods, showing that God is worth ten thousand times ten thousand of human beings; yea, worth more than all the creatures that ever have been, and all that ever will be created:

"Suppose you take the capacity for happiness, which has been said by philosophers to be the only true standard of perfection:—if the happiness which God enjoys were divided into portions, each of which would be sufficient to fill an archangel to overflowing, there would be an infinite number of those portions. God's happiness is not merely a fountain, but an ocean without bottom or shore. And this should be a never-failing source of consolation to the Christian, when he reflects on all the misery in the world, that still happiness predominates; for God is infinitely—infinitely happy.

"The man who should go round the universe—suppose, if you will, that each of the numerous millions of stars known to astronomers is the centre of a system, and that each of these innumerable worlds is as populous as our own; yet the man who should, at one fell stroke, fill all these countless myriads of beings to the very brim with wretchedness, would do infinitely less mischief than he who should, if that were possible, destroy the happiness of Jehovah. In the first instance, it would be but poisoning the streams; in the latter, the fountain itself would be turned into bitterness. * * *

"Thus we have proved that God is worth infinitely more than all his creatures. But, instead of acknowledging and feeling this, men practically exalt themselves ten thousand times above God. They think ten thousand times as much of themselves as of God; an injury done to themselves affects them ten thousand times as much as one done to God; and Jehovah sees himself cast down—down—down from his throne, to make room for little insignificant worms of the dust.

And what can be worse than this! Men talk about degrees of wickedness, because some have broken the laws of their country and others have not; but this undervaluing and degrading their Maker is what all have done, and it is not possible to go farther in wickedness. Yes; this is what I have done—and I desire to make the confession with shame. I have done this; and you have done this, my hearers. In the presence of this much insulted God, I must charge it upon you. And I tell you, my hearers, if you do not repent of this conduct God will be obliged to put you down—down—down, as low as you have degraded him. If he should not do this; if, out of false pity to one individual, he should pardon you without repentance; that instant all the songs of heaven would stop, and all the happiness of the universe would be dried up. Heaven, the habitation of God's glory, where myriads of celestial intelligences are contemplating his infinite perfections, would become, from a place of perfect and unmingled happiness, a scene of unutterable, inconceivable misery. 'Jehovah is no longer worthy to be trusted! Jehovah is no longer worthy to be trusted!' would be the universal and pathetic exclamation. 'We thought there was one Being, and only one, on whom we might depend; but even He has failed; and where now shall we look for perfection!' But, blessed be God! these dreadful imaginings can never be realized, for Jehovah will *never change*."

In this connection we shall introduce a paragraph communicated by a ministering brother, who occupied his pulpit on the day in which the interview mentioned took place:

"As an instance of his strong fancy, and of the uses to which he applied it, I will mention, that on the last Sabbath in which, with great difficulty, he entered the house of God, he said to me—'I find in my illness that the power of imagination is unweakened, and that it is very easy for me to wander into the regions of fancy. On the subject of the wisdom of God in the direction of mysterious events, and our duty of submission and faith, it has occurred to me recently, that our conceptions might be assisted by imagining God to take a human form, answering—if it were possible—to his infinite nature. What would be its dimensions? The angel in the book of Revelation is represented as standing with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and lifting up his hand to heaven. But were God in a form such as I have supposed, one foot would be on the remotest star in one direction of infinite space, and the other foot on the remotest star in the opposite direction of the unbounded expanse:—and should we propose to climb from his feet to the glories of his face—if we had the speed of light, and had been traveling from the creation of the world, we should have made little progress in our journey. And shall we then presumptuously judge of the ways of this God, and imagine that we could manage earthly things more wisely than he? Shall we have any doubts as to his unfailing wisdom, and perfect rectitude, and infinite goodness?' I have not been able to give you his words, but I have given you his thoughts."

Of the penetrating and all-absorbing effect of his last public ministrations, particularly at the communion table, some feeble conception may be formed from an extract furnished by a gentleman, who, for twelve years, had been only an occasional attendant on his ministry. The first paragraph has no special reference to this period, but may properly be retained for the value of its testimony:

"At the sacramental table especially did his mind appear to be absorbed in the contemplation of things unseen and eternal. To a candid observer it was manifest, at such seasons, that his 'fellowship was with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' I doubt not that I express the feelings of each member of his church, when I say that often, on these occasions, he seemed to soar to the third heaven, and by those fervent and elevated effusions of thought with which he always accompanied his administration of the ordinance, he literally carried the minds if not the hearts of his hearers with him. His influence in this respect is associated with my earliest recollections of Dr Payson. In one particular instance, which occurred during my boyhood, such was the absorbing influence of his eloquence on my own mind; arising, doubtless more from the attraction of his fervent zeal, and that creative fancy for which he was so remarkably distinguished, than from any special regard on my own part, to the truths he uttered; that from the commencement of the public services of the afternoon to the close of the sacramental season which succeeded them, it seemed like a pleasing reverie; and had all the effect of an ocular survey of every scene connected with the humiliation and exaltation of the Savior. So strong was the mental impression received, that I can still distinctly recollect not only his text on that occasion—Rev. 4 : 3, latter clause—but also the hymn with which the public services were introduced—H. 25, B. 1, Watts. He seemed to have taken his flight from one of the most elevated heights of meditation, and to soar in a climax of devotion and sublimity of thought, until faith changed the heavenly vision into a reality, and spread all the glories of redemption around the consecrated symbols of Christ's death.

"I had the solemn pleasure, too, of being present at one of his *last* communion seasons with the church on earth. It was an affecting, a soul-cheering scene. Its interest was greatly enhanced by the nearness in which he seemed to stand to the communion of the church triumphant. His body was so emaciated with long and acute suffering, that it was scarcely able to sustain the effort once more imposed upon it; but his soul, raised above its perishing influence, and filled with a joyful tranquillity, seemed entirely regardless of the weakness of its mortal tenement. His right hand and arm were so palsied by disease as to be quite useless, except that in the act of breaking the bread, when he could not well dispense with it, he placed it on the table with the other hand, just as you raise any lifeless weight, until it had performed the service required of it. It seemed as if he was unwilling that even the withered hand should be found unemployed in the holy work. Truly, thought I, there must be a blessed reality in that religion which can thus make the soul tranquil and happy in the constant and rapid advances of decay and death!

"I have never known Dr. Payson when he seemed more abstracted from earth than on this occasion. It was, as he supposed, and as his church feared, their final interview at that table. In all the glowing fervor of devotion, assisted by his ever-fertile imagination, he contemplated the Savior as *visibly* present in the midst of them; and with his usual eloquence and closeness of appeal he seemed to make each communicant feel that what he had imagined was a reality. There was a breathless silence; and the solemnity of the scene could hardly have been surpassed, if, as he expressed it, the Lord Jesus Christ were seen sitting before them, or addressing to each individual member the momentous inquiry, 'Lovest thou me?' I can say for one, that the terrors of hypocrisy never swelled so fearful, and the realities of the judgment-seat never seemed nearer, than at that solemn hour. And I trust many were then enabled from the heart to pray, with the Psalmist, *Search me, O God*, &c.

"From the occasional opportunities I have enjoyed of attending on Dr. Payson's administration of that ordinance, I can have no doubt that they were to him foretastes of that supper of the Lamb on whose more blessed celebration he so triumphantly entered. And it is an interesting, a momentous question—

> "Shall we, who sat with him below,
> Commune with him above?"

On the first of July he attended public worship, and, after a sermon from his assistant, he rose and addressed his people thus:

"Ever since I became a minister, it has been my earnest wish that I might die of some disease which would allow me to preach a farewell sermon to my people; but as it is not probable that I shall ever be able to do this, I will attempt to say a few words now;—it may be the last time that I shall ever address you. This is not merely a presentiment. It is an opinion founded on facts, and maintained by physicians acquainted with my case, that I shall never behold another spring.

"And now, standing on the borders of the eternal world, I look back on my past ministry, and on the manner in which I have performed its duties; and, O my hearers, if you have not performed your duties better than I have mine, wo! wo! be to you—unless you have an Advocate and Intercessor in heaven. We have lived together twenty years, and have spent more than a thousand Sabbaths together, and I have given you at least two thousand warnings. I am now going to render an account *how* they were given, and you, my hearers, will soon have to render an account how they were *received.* *One* more warning I will give you. Once more your shepherd, who will be yours no longer, entreats you to flee from the wrath to come. Oh, let me have the happiness of seeing my dear people attending to their eternal interests, that I may not have reason to say, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought."

At the communion table the same day he said—

"Christians seem to expect that their views of Christ and love to him will increase without their using the proper means. They should select some scene in his life, and meditate long upon it, and strive to bring the circumstances before their minds, and imagine how he thought and felt at the time. At first, all will appear confused and indistinct; but let them continue to look steadily, and the mists will disappear, and their hearts will begin to burn with love to their Savior. At least one scene in Christ's life should be thus reviewed every day, if the Christian hopes to find his love to his Redeemer increase."

His public labors were now nearly over; but he was daily and hourly uttering something to rouse the careless, or for the instruction, edification, and comfort of God's children.

To his daughter, who expressed a wish that labor as certainly ensured success in spiritual as in temporal affairs, he said—"It does; it is just as certain that prayers for spiritual blessings will be answered whenever God sees best, as that the husbandman, who sows his seed with proper precaution, will reap. The only reason that our endeavors to obtain spiritual blessings are not oftener attended with success, is, they are not made in earnest. Never omit prayer, or any devotional exercise, when the stated season for it arrives, because you feel indisposed to the duty."

July 12, 13, 1827. On both these days Dr. Payson seemed a little revived. He had tried sailing around the harbor, and found it beneficial. On repeating the experiment, however, he discovered that though these water excursions were of service to his lungs, they increased the paralytic affection—if such it was—in his arm, and they were relinquished.

July 22. Sabbath. To his daughter he said, "There is nothing in which young converts are more prone to err, than in laying too much stress upon their feelings. If they have a comfortable half hour in the morning it atones for a multitude of sins in the course of the day. Christ says, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments.' It would be well for us to pay more attention to our conduct, and prove the depth of our feeling by our obedience." He also advised her to observe some plan with regard to reading on the Sabbath. In the morning he recommended reading the Scriptures exclusively, and afterwards works intended to convey information respecting religious subjects.

July 29. He remarked to some new converts who called, that the most important direction he could give them was, to spend much time in retired converse with the Scriptures, and with God. "If you wished to cherish the remembrance of an absent friend, you would read over his letters daily, meditate on his acts of kindness to you, and look at any tokens of affection which he might have left you.

"We are accustomed to suppose that God's feelings towards us vary according to our own; that when we are in a lively spiritual frame of mind he regards us with more complacency than at other times. This is not the case. The feelings with which God regards us do not fluctuate like ours."

August 5. Sabbath. This day he entered the meeting-house for the last time; and this month completes twenty years since he entered it the first time as a preacher—then a trembling youth, now the spiritual father of many hundreds; then just girded for the warfare, now the veteran who had "fought the good fight," and was just going to resign his commission and receive a crown of unfading glory. He made a great effort to go out, as there were twenty-one persons to be admitted to the church. He was supported into the house by his senior deacons; and although he merely read the covenant and remained during the administration of the sacrament, he was exceedingly overcome. Most of the persons present were much affected, and after the services many crowded around him, to take his hand for the last time.

August 8. He had a violent nervous head-ache; and was much interrupted in speaking by a difficulty of breathing; but said in a cheerful voice to some of his church who were in—"I want you always to believe that God is faithful. However dark and mysterious any of his dispensations may appear, still confide in him. He can make you happy when every thing else is taken from you."

August 13. He received from a society of young men in his congregation, who were associated for religious improvement, a letter, in which they generously offered to give his son a liberal education. The following is his answer:

"*To the Society for Religious Improvement.*

"Beloved Brethren,

"No act of kindness which it was in the power of man to show could have been more soothing to my anxieties as a dying parent, or more grateful to a dying minister, than your unexpected and most generous offer to furnish the means of a liberal education to my oldest son.

"Most fervently do I thank you for making this offer, and the Author of all good for inducing you to do it. To see him thus already beginning to take care of a family which I must soon leave, is a great encouragement to my faith that he will continue to take care of them after I am gone.

"If it is any satisfaction to you to know that you have assisted to smooth your pastor's dying pillow and shed light on his last hours, you may feel that satisfaction in a very high degree. With most earnest prayers that God would reward you abundantly for this kind offer, I have concluded to accept it, provided that my son, when he shall have attained the age of sixteen, shall be found to possess such a character as will justify a hope that he will make a good use of the advantages with which you generously furnish him And now, brethren, farewell."

During this month his "wreck of being" was further shattered by a spasmodic cough, which at times threatened absolute strangulation.

Sept. 4. He said to his wife and daughter—"I do not think you are sufficiently thankful for my consolations, or realize how wonderful it is that I am thus supported. Owing to my natural activity, and unwillingness to be dependent on others for the supply of my wants, these trials are exactly those which are most calculated to make me miserable. But God can sweeten the bitterest cup."

He afterwards said, with emotions which would hardly allow him to speak,—"Oh, my daughter, how you will regret, when you come to see how good God is, that you did not serve him better. Oh! he is *so* good, *so* good."

Sept. 9. During the preceding week he had rode out several times, being carried down stairs and lifted into the chaise. For a few days he thought himself better; but these favorable appearances were of short duration. He remarked that sometimes, in order to try his people's faith, God gives them a prospect that an affliction is about to be removed, and then permits it to return again. He compared his present case to that of a man, who, after having been a long time confined in prison, finds his door open one morning; but, on attempting to leave it, the door is suddenly closed with such violence as to throw him prostrate on the floor.

He was asked on this day by some of his friends, if he could see any particular reason for this dispensation. "No," replied he; "but I am as well satisfied as if I could see ten thousand. God's will is the very perfection of all reason."

In answer to the question by a lady from B. Are you better than you were? he replied, "Not in body, but in mind. If my happiness continues to increase, I cannot support it much longer." On being asked, Are your views of heaven clearer and brighter than ever before? he said—"Why, for a few moments, I may have had as bright; but formerly my joys were tumultuous; now all is calm and peaceful." He was asked, "In your anticipations of heaven, do you think of meeting departed friends?" After a moment's reflection he said, with a most expressive countenance, "If I meet Christ, 'tis no matter whether I see others or not—though I shall want some to help me praise him." He doubtless had an opinion on this subject; but he remembered Christ's answer to the question, "Are there few that be saved?"

"God deals strangely with his creatures to promote their happiness. Who would have thought that I must be reduced to this state, helpless and crippled, to experience the highest enjoyment!"

"You ought to feel happy, all ought to feel happy who come here, for they are within a few steps of heaven." During the course of this conversation he repeated this verse, "Thy sun shall no more go down neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." Turning to a young lady present, he said, "Do you not think this is worth traveling over many high hills and difficult places to obtain?" "Give my love to my friends in Boston; tell them all I ever said in praise of God or religion falls infinitely below the truth."

"Dr. Clarke in his travels, speaking of the companies that were traveling from the East to Jerusalem, represents the procession as being very long; and, after climbing over the extended and heavy ranges of hills that bounded the way, some of the foremost at length reached the top of the last hill, and, stretching up their hands in gestures of joy, cried out, 'The Holy City! the Holy City!'—and fell down and worshiped; while those who were behind pressed forward to see. So the dying Christian, when he gets on the last summit of life, and stretches his vision to catch a glimpse of the heavenly city, may cry out of its glories, and incite those who are behind to press forward to the sight."

To a clergyman—"Oh, if ministers only saw the inconceivable glory that is before them, and the preciousness of Christ, they would not be able to refrain from going about leaping and clapping their hands for joy, and exclaiming, I'm a minister of Christ! I'm a minister of Christ!"

"When I read Bunyan's description of the land of Beulah, where the sun shines and the birds sing day and night, I used to doubt whether there was such a place; but now my own experience has convinced me of it, and it infinitely transcends all my previous conceptions.'

"I think the happiness I enjoy is similar to that enjoyed by glorified spirits before the resurrection."

Sept. 16. Sabbath. He awaked exclaiming, "I am going to mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to God the Judge of all."

During the night of September 17th he was seized with spasms, which it seemed must separate soul and body. It was not thought by his physician that he could survive a second attack; but his hold on life remained, though the spasms continued to return every succeeding night with more or less violence. Every new attack seemed, however, to strengthen the energies of his mind. No better evidence of this can be desired, than is exhibited in a letter which he dictated to his sister:

"*September* 19, 1827.

'DEAR SISTER,

'Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odors are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached and now he fills the whole hemisphere; pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants: I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.

"But why do I speak thus of myself and my feelings? why not speak only of our God and Redeemer? It is because I know not what to say. When I would speak of them my words are all swallowed up. I can only tell you what effects their presence produces, and even of these I can tell you but very little. O, my sister! my sister! could you but know what awaits the Christian; could you know only so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy. Labors, trials, troubles would be nothing: you would rejoice in afflictions and glory in tribulations; and, like Paul and Silas, sing God's praises in the darkest night and in the deepest dungeon. You have known a little of my trials and conflicts, and know that they have been neither few nor small; and I hope this glorious termination of them will serve to strengthen your faith and elevate your hope.

"And now, my dear, dear sister, farewell. Hold on your Christian course but a few days longer, and you will meet in heaven,

"Your happy and affectionate brother,

"Edward Payson."

The next day he sent for the editor of a religious journal and expressed his wishes in regard to the disposition which should be made of a certain class of effusions which his exit would probably call forth adding, "I make this request about as much for your sake as my own." He had then survived three or four of these dreadful nocturnal attacks, but observed that he could not calculate upon surviving another. In answer to the question, why he was thus affected in the night rather than the day—he proceeded with as much readiness as if it had been the study of his life, to give a philosophical account of the change which takes place in the body, in its transit from a state of wakefulness to that of sleep. "Then," said he, "that is as soon as the will resigns its power over the muscles and organs of the body—then my diseases commence their gambols."

To his daughter, who was obliged to defer a contemplated undertaking by an approaching storm, he turned and said with a smile—"I suppose you feel as if the equinox ought to be deferred on account of your school."

Sept. 21. "O what a blessed thing it is to lose one's will! Since I have lost my will I have found happiness. There can be no such thing as disappointment to me, for I have no desires but that God's will may be accomplished.

"I have been all my life like a child whose father wishes to fix his undivided attention. At first, the child runs about the room—but his father ties up his feet; he then plays with his hands, until they likewise are tied. Thus he continues to do, till he is completely tied up; then, when he can do nothing else, he will attend to his father Just so God has been dealing wi me, to induce me to place my happiness in him alone. But I blindly continued to look for it here; and God has kept cutting off one source of enjoyment after another, till I find that I can do without them all, and yet enjoy more happiness than ever in my life before.

" It sounds so flat, when people tell me that it is *just* for God to afflict me, as if justice did not require infinitely more."

He was asked, "Do you feel reconciled?"—"O! that is too cold. I rejoice, I triumph! and this happiness will endure as long as God himself, for it consists in admiring and adoring him."

" I can find no words to express my happiness. I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure, which is carrying me on to the great fountain."

Sabbath morning, Sept. 23d, he said,—" Last night I had a full, clear view of Death as the king of terrors; how he comes and crowds the poor sinner to the very verge of the precipice of destruction, and then pushes him down headlong! But I felt that I had nothing to do with this; and I loved to sit like an infant at the feet of Christ, who saved *me* from this fate. I felt that death was disarmed of all its terrors; all he could do would be to touch me, and let my soul loose to go to my Savior.

" Christians are like passengers setting out together in a ship for some distant country. Very frequently one drops overboard; but his companions know that he has only gone a shorter way to the same port; and that when they arrive there they shall find him; so that all they lose is his company during the rest of the voyage."

" I long to measure out a full cup of happiness to every body, but Christ wisely keeps that prerogative in his own hands."

"It seems as if all the bottles of heaven were opened; and all its fullness and happiness, and, I trust, no small portion of its benevolence, is come down into my heart."

"I am more and more convinced that the happiness of heaven is a benevolent happiness. In proportion as my joy has increased I have been filled with intense love to all creatures, and a strong desire that they might partake of my happiness."

Sept. 26. In answer to some complaints of one of the family he said—"Perhaps there is nothing more trying to the faith and patience of Christians, or which appears to them more mysterious, than the small supplies of grace which they receive, and the delays which they meet with in having their prayers answered; so that they are sometimes ready to say, It is in vain to wait upon the Lord any longer." He then mentioned the text, "'Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end for the *grace* that is to be brought unto you at the *revelation of Jesus Christ.*' A large portion of the grace which Christians are to receive will be given to them at the second coming of Christ, or immediately after death; and this will always be in proportion to their prayers and exertions here. Christians need not, therefore, be discouraged at the slow progress they make, and the little success which attends their efforts; for they may be assured that every exertion is noticed, and will be rewarded, by their heavenly Father."

To a young convert he said—"You will have to go through many conflicts and trials; you must be put in the furnace, and tempted, and tried, in order to show you what is in your heart. Sometimes it will seem as if Satan had you in his power, and that the more you struggle and pray against sin, the more it prevails against you. But when you are thus tried and desponding, remember me; I have gone through all this, and now you see the end."

To another—"You recollect the story of David rescuing the lamb from the lion and the bear. David loved the lamb before he rescued it from danger; but he loved it more afterwards. So Christ loves all his creatures; but he loves them more after he has taken them into his fold, and owned them as the purchase of his precious blood."

"Christians might avoid much trouble and inconvenience, if they would only believe what they profess—that God is able to make them happy without any thing else. They imagine that if such a dear friend were to die, or such and such blessings to be removed, they should be miserable; whereas God can make them a thousand times happier without them. To mention my own case—God has been depriving me of one blessing after another; but, as every one was removed, he has come in and filled up its place; and now, when I am a cripple, and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in my life before, or ever expected to be; and if I had believed this twenty years ago, I might have been spared much anxiety."

"If God had told me some time ago that he was about to make me as happy as I could be in this world, and then had told me that he should begin by crippling me in all my limbs, and removing me from all my usual sources of enjoyment; I should have thought it a very strange mode of accomplishing his purpose. And yet, how is his wisdom manifest even in this! for if you should see a man shut up in a close room, idolizing a set of lamps and rejoicing in their light, and you wished to make him truly happy, you would begin by blowing out all his lamps; and then throw open the shutters to let in the light of heaven."

" Suppose a son is walking with his father, in whose wisdom he places the most entire confidence. He follows wherever his father leads, though it may be through thorns and briers, cheerfully and contentedly. Another son, we will suppose, distrusts his father's wisdom and love, and, when the path is rough or uneven, begins to murmur and repine, wishing that he might be allowed to choose his own path; and though he is obliged to follow, it is with great reluctance and discontent. Now, the reason that Christians in general do not enjoy more of God's presence is, that they are not willing to walk in his path when it crosses their own inclinations. But we shall never be happy until we acquiesce with perfect cheerfulness in all his decisions, and follow wherever he leads, without a murmur."

After it had become certain that he would never again leave his chamber till he was carried out, yet, being unceasingly desirous to benefit his people, he sent a request, which was announced from the pulpit, that they would repair to his chamber. Once, it is believed, they came indiscriminately; at other times in specified classes, including as many as the chamber could contain. When he had addressed to them collectively his last most solemn and affectionate counsel, till compelled to desist by the failure of his strength, he took them individually by the hand, and, with a heavenly smile, bade them farewell!

To the members of his congregation he spoke nearly as follows:

"It has often been remarked that people who have been into the other world cannot come back to tell us what they have seen; but I am so near the eternal world that I can see almost as clearly as if I were there; and I see enough to satisfy myself at least of the truth of the doctrines which I have preached. I do not know that I should feel at all surer had I been really there.

"It is always interesting to see others in a situation in which we know that we must shortly be placed ourselves; and we all know that we must die. And to see a poor creature when, after an alternation of hopes and fears, he finds that his disease is mortal, and death comes to tear him away from every thing he loves, and crowds, and crowds him to the very verge of the precipice of destruction, and then thrusts him down headlong! There he is, cast into an unknown world; no friend, no Savior to receive him!

"O how different is this from the state of a man who is prepared to die! He is not obliged to be crowded reluctantly along; but the other world comes like a great magnet to draw him away from this; and he knows that he is going to enjoy—and not only knows but begins to taste it—perfect happiness; for ever and ever; for ever and ever! * * * * *

"And now God is in this room; I see him! and O how unspeakably lovely and glorious does he appear! worthy of ten thousand thousand hearts, if we had them. He is here, and hears me pleading with the creatures that he has made, whom he preserves and loads with blessings, to love him. And O how terrible does it appear to me to sin against this God; to set up our wills in opposition to his; and when we awake in the morning, instead of thinking, 'What shall I do to please my God to-day?' to inquire, 'What shall I do to please myself to-day?'" After a short pause he continued, "It makes my blood run cold to think how inexpressibly miserable I should now be without religion. To lie here and see myself tottering on the verge of destruction!—O, I should be distracted! And when I see my fellow-creatures liable every moment to be reduced to this situation, I am in an agony for them that they may escape their danger before it be too late. When people repent they begin to see God's infinite perfections, how amiable and glorious he is, and the heart relents and mourns that it has treated him so ungratefully.

"Suppose we should hear the sound of a man's voice pleading earnestly with some one, but could not distinguish the words; and we should inquire, 'What is that man pleading for so earnestly?' 'O, he is only pleading with a fellow-creature to love his God, his Savior, his Preserver and Benefactor. He is only pleading with him not to throw away his immortal soul, not to pull down everlasting wretchedness upon his own head. He is only persuading him to avoid eternal misery, and to accept eternal happiness.' 'Is it possible, we should exclaim, 'that any persuasion can be necessary for this?' and yet it is necessary. O my friends, do, do love this glorious Being—do seek for the salvation of your immortal souls. Hear the voice of your dying minister, while he entreats you to care for your souls."

He afterwards said—"I am always sorry when I say any thing to any one who comes in; it seems so inadequate to what I wish to express. The words sink right down under the weight of the meaning I wish to convey."

On another occasion—"I find no satisfaction in looking at any thing I have done; I want to leave all this behind—it is nothing—and fly to Christ to be clothed in his righteousness."

Again—"I have done nothing myself. I have not fought, but Christ has fought for me; I have not run, but Christ has carried me; I have not worked, but Christ has wrought in me—Christ has done all."

The perfections of God were to him a well-spring of joy, and the promises were "breasts of consolation," whence his soul drew its comfort and its aliment. "O!" exclaimed he, "the loving-kindness of God—his loving-kindness! This afternoon, while I was meditating on it. the Lord seemed to pass by, and proclaim himself 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious!' O how gracious! Try to conceive of that, his *loving-kindness*, as if it were not enough to say kindness, but—*loving* kindness. What must be the loving kindness of God, who is himself infinite love!'

"It seemed this afternoon as if Christ said to me, "You have often wondered and been impatient at the way by which I have led you; but what do you think of it now?' And I was cut to the heart when I looked back and saw the wisdom and goodness by which I had been guided, that I could ever for a moment distrust his love."

A clergyman from another state, who visited Dr Payson about this stage of his illness, gave the following account of the interview in a letter to a friend:

"His eye beams with the same animation as ever. The muscles of his face are unaffected by that which has spread all but death throughout the other parts of his system. When I entered the chamber, addressing me with a smile, he said, 'I have no hand to welcome you with, but I am glad to see you.' I observed to him that I was reluctant to lay any tax upon him in his present weak state, but had felt desirous to see him a moment. He replied that he did not feel parsimonious of the poor remains of strength he had left: he had got so near through, that it was not worth while to be solicitous about saving for future time. He conversed in a low, audible voice, and in the same strain of pointed, pithy remark as when in health. He observed that the point in which he believed ministers generally failed most, and in which he had certainly failed most, was in doing duty professionally, and not from the heart. I could not but say to him that probably his practice had been marked with less of this error than that of most others. He seemed pained with the thought that any should be more deficient than he had been: 'O, I hope it is not so! I hope it is not so!' Referring to the peace which the Gospel afforded him under his trials, he said, 'I have never half valued as I ought the doctrines which I have preached. The system is great and glorious, and is worthy of our utmost efforts to promote it. The interests depending will justify us in our strongest measures. In every respect we may embark our all upon it; it will sustain us.'

"Speaking of the temper requisite to the right discharge of ministerial duty, he said, 'I never was fit to say a word to a sinner, except when I had a broken heart myself; when I was subdued and melted into penitence, and felt as though I had just received pardon to my own soul, and when my heart was full of tenderness and pity—no anger, no anger.' He expressed himself with great earnestness respecting the grace of God as exercised in saving lost men, and seemed particularly affected that it should be bestowed on one so ill deserving as himself. 'O how sovereign! O how sovereign! Grace is the only thing that can make us like God. I might be dragged through heaven, earth and hell, and I should be still the same sinful, polluted wretch, unless God himself should renew and cleanse me.' He inquired whether I could preach to his people on the morrow. Being told that I was not well, he replied, 'Then do not preach; I have too often preached when I was not able.'

"On taking leave I expressed a hope that he might continue to enjoy the presence of God, and receive even increasing peace, if he could bear it. 'O!' said he, 'when we meet in heaven we shall see how little we know about it.' His whole manner and appearance is that of a man who has drunk into the spirit of heaven far more deeply than those around him."

October 7. In conversation with his eldest daughter, on being asked whether self-examination was not a very difficult duty for young Christians to perform, he replied, "Yes; and for old ones too, because it is displeasing to the pride of the heart, because wandering thoughts are then most apt to intrude, and because of the deceitfulness of the heart. When a Christian first begins to look into his heart, he sees nothing but confusion; a heap of sins and a very little good mixed up together; and he knows not how to separate them, or how to begin self-examination. But let him persevere in his efforts, and soon order will arise ou of confusion." She mentioned to him a passage in the life of Mr. Alleine, which led him to say, "We never confess any faults that we consider really disgraceful. We complain of our hardness of heart, stupidity, &c. but we never confess envy, or covetousness, or revenge, or any thing that we suppose will lower us in the opinion of others; and this proves that we do not feel ashamed of coldness or stupidity. In short, when young Christians make confessions, unless there is an obvious call for them, it usually proceeds from one of these three motives; either they wish to be thought very humble, and to possess great knowledge of their own hearts; or they think it is a fault which the other has perceived, and are willing to have the credit of having discovered and striven against it; or they confess some fault, from which they are remarkably free, in order to elicit a compliment.

"There are no two feelings apparently more unlike than mortified pride and gratified pride; yet they are, in reality, very similar; and we are indulging one of these feelings almost constantly. When God permits every thing to go on very smoothly, and grants us some comforts, our pride is gratified; we are pleased with ourselves, with God—and call the feeling gratitude—and with those around us; we can be very pleasant and obliging. But let this state of things be reversed; let our corruptions be suffered to break loose, and trials and conflicts to assail us—then our pride is mortified; we begin to fret and repine, and say that all our endeavors are useless. You cannot yet conceive how very small a portion of grace we have; so that, if we doubt whether matter is infinitely divisible, we can hardly doubt that grace is so."

"With regard to self-examination, we should always have, as it were, our eye turned inward, to watch our motives and feelings. We should also, at night, review the conduct of the day; and it would aid you to do this, if you made an abstract of the duties you owe to God and to your fellow-creatures in the several relations of life, and also of your besetting sins. But the most important direction I can give you is, to *look to Christ;* for while we are contemplating his perfections we insensibly imbibe his Spirit."

Notwithstanding his deep seriousness, there was occasionally a pleasantry in his manner of expressing himself which would excite an involuntary smile: "What contrary and unreasonable creatures we are! The more God does for us the less we thank him. Here I am, stripped of more than half my blessings, as we ordinarily estimate them, and yet I never felt half so grateful to God before. We are just like the harlequin when hired to mourn, of whom his employer said, 'The better I pay him the more he won't grieve.'"

A gray-headed member of his church, who is usually very abrupt in his address, but generally very scriptural, entered his chamber one day with the salutation—"Watchman, what of the night?"—"I should think it was about noon-day," was the answer.

On Sabbath-day, Oct. 7, it was the privilege of the young men of the congregation to assemble, at his request, in his chamber, when he addressed them in substance as follows:

My young friends, you will all one day be obliged to embark on the same voyage on which I am just embarking; and as it has been my especial employment, during my past life, to recommend to you a Pilot to guide you through this voyage, I wished to tell you what a precious Pilot he is, that you may be induced to choose him for yours. I felt desirous that you might see that the religion I have preached can support me in death. You know that I have many ties which bind me to earth—a family to whom I am strongly attached, and a people whom I love almost as well—but the other world acts like a much stronger magnet, and draws my heart away from this. Death comes every night and stands by my bedside in the form of terrible convulsions, every one of which threatens to separate the soul from the body. These continue to grow worse and worse, until every bone is almost dislocated with pain, leaving me with the certainty that I shall have it all to endure again the next night. Yet, while my body is thus tortured, the soul is perfectly, perfectly happy and peaceful—more happy than I can possibly express to you. I lie here and feel these convulsions extending higher and higher, but my soul is filled with joy unspeakable. I seem to swim in a flood of glory which God pours down upon me. And I know, I *know* that my happiness is but begun, I cannot doubt that it will last for ever. And now, is this all a delusion? Is it a delusion which can fill the soul to overflowing with joy in such circumstances? If so, it is surely a delusion better than any reality. But no, it is not a delusion; I feel that it is not. I do not merely know that I *shall* enjoy all this—*I enjoy it now.*

"My young friends—were I master of the whole world, what could it do for me like this? Were all its wealth at my feet, and all its inhabitants striving to make me happy, what could they do for me? Nothing! nothing! Now, all this happiness I trace back to the religion which I have preached, and to the time when that great change took place in my heart, which I have often told you is necessary to salvation; and I now tell you again, that without this change you cannot, no, you *cannot* see the kingdom of God.

"And now, standing as I do on the ridge which separates the two worlds, feeling what intense happiness or misery the soul is capable of sustaining; judging of your capacities by my own, and believing that those capacities will be filled to the very brim with joy or wretchedness for ever; can it be wondered at that my heart yearns over you, my children, that you may choose life and not death? Is it to be wondered at that I long to present every one of you with a cup of happiness and see you drink it; that I long to have you make the same choice which I made, and from which springs all my happiness?

"A young man just about to leave this world exclaimed, 'The battle's fought! the battle's fought! the battle's fought! but the victory is lost for ever!' But I can say, The battle's fought and the victory is *won!* the victory is won, for ever! I am going to bathe in an ocean of purity, and benevolence, and happiness, to all eternity. And now, my children, let me bless you; not with the blessing of a poor, feeble, dying man, but with the blessing of the infinite God. The grace of God, and the love of Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with all, and each one of you, for ever and ever: Amen."

Having delivered his dying messages to all classes among his own flock, he commissioned a ministering brother to bear one to the Association of Ministers who were to meet in a few days. The purport of it was—"a hearty assurance of the ardent love with which he remembered them even in death; an exhortation to love one another with a pure heart fervently; to love their work, to be diligent in it, to expect success, to bear up under their discouragements, be faithful unto death, and look for their reward in heaven." I rejoice, said the brother, rejoice more than I can express, to be the bearer of *such* a message; for you, perhaps, are aware that many of your brethren have thought you distant and reserved, and as having cherished too little of a fellow-feeling towards them. "I know it," said he; "but my apparent reserve was not owing to any want of affection for them, but to a very different cause: I have been all my days like a soldier in the fore-front of the hottest battle, so intent in fighting for my own life, that *I could not see who was falling around me.*"

While speaking of the rapturous views he had of the heavenly world, he was asked if it did not seem almost like the clear light of vision, rather than that of faith. "Oh!" he replied, "I don't know—it is too much for the poor eyes of my soul to bear!—they are almost blinded with the excessive brightness. All I want is to be a mirror, to reflect some of those rays to those around me."

"My soul, instead of growing weaker and more languishing, as my body does, seems to be endued with an angel's energies, and to be ready to break from the body and join those around the throne."

A friend, with whom he had been conversing on his extreme bodily sufferings and his high spiritual joys, remarked—" I presume it is no longer incredible to you, if ever it was, that martyrs should rejoice and praise God in the flames and on the rack."—" No," said he, "I can easily believe it. I have suffered twenty times—yes, to speak within bounds—twenty times as much as I could in being burnt at the stake, while my joy in God so abounded as to render my sufferings not only tolerable but welcome. *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.*

At another time—" God is literally now my all in all. While he is present with me no event can in the least diminish my happiness; and were the whole world at my feet trying to minister to my comfort, they could not add one drop to the cup.

" It seems as if the promise, ' God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,' was already fulfilled to me, as it respects tears of sorrow. I have no tears to shed now but those of love, and joy, and thankfulness."

October 16. To his daughter—" You will avoid much pain and anxiety, if you will learn to trust all your concerns in God's hand. ' Cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' But if you merely go and *say* that you cast your care upon him, you will come away with the load on your shoulders. If I had the entire disposal of your situation, and could decide how many scholars you should have, and what success you should meet with, you would feel no anxiety, but would rely on my love and wisdom; and if you should discover any solicitude, it would show that you distrusted one or the other of these. Now all your concerns are in the hands of a merciful and wise Father; therefore it is an insult to him to be careful and anxious concerning them. Trust him for all—abilities, success, and every thing else—and you will never have reason to repent it."

At one time he was heard to break forth in the following soliloquy:

"What an assemblage of motives to holiness does the Gospel present! I am a Christian—what then? Why, I am a redeemed sinner—a pardoned rebel—all through grace, and by the most wonderful means which infinite wisdom could devise. I am a Christian—what then? Why, I am a temple of God, and surely I ought to be pure and holy. I am a Christian—what then? I am a child of God, and ought to be filled with filial love, reverence, joy, and gratitude. I am a Christian—what then? Why, I am a disciple of Christ, and must imitate him who was meek and lowly in heart, and pleased not himself. I am a Christian—what then? Why, I am an heir of heaven, and hastening on to the abodes of the blessed, to join the full choir of glorified ones, in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb; and surely I ought to learn that song on earth."

To Mrs. Payson, who, while ministering to him, had observed, "Your head feels hot, and seems to be distended," he replied—"It seems as if the soul disdained such a narrow prison, and was determined to break through with an angel's energy, and, I trust, with no small portion of an angel's feeling, until it mounts on high."

Again—"It seems as if my soul had found a pair of new wings, and was so eager to try them, that in her fluttering she would rend the fine net-work of the body to pieces."

At another time—"My dear, I should think it might encourage and strengthen you, under whatever trials you may be called to endure, to remember me. O! you must believe that it will be great peace at last."

At another time he said to her—"After I am gone, you will find many little streams of beneficence pouring in upon you, and you will perhaps say, 'I wish my dear husband were here to know this.' My dear, you may think that I do know it by anticipation, and praise God for it now."

"Hitherto I have viewed God as a fixed Star, bright indeed, but often intercepted by clouds; but now he is coming nearer and nearer, and spreads into a Sun so vast and glorious, that the sight is too dazzling for flesh and blood to sustain." This was not a blind adoration of an imaginary deity; for, added he, "I see clearly that all these same glorious and dazzling perfections which now only serve to kindle my affections into a flame, and to melt down my soul into the same blessed image, would burn and scorch me like a consuming fire, if I were an impenitent sinner."

He said he felt no solicitude respecting his family; he could trust them all in the hands of Christ. To feel any undue solicitude on their account, or to be unwilling to leave them with God, would be like "a child who was reluctant to go to school, lest his father should burn up his toys and play-things while he was absent."

Conversing with a friend on his preparation for his departure, he compared himself to "a person who had been visiting his friends, and was about to return home. His trunk was packed, and every thing prepared, and he was looking out of the window, waiting for the stage to take him in."

When speaking of the sufferings he endured, particularly the sensation of burning in his side and left leg, he said that if he expected to live long enough to make it worth while, he would have his leg taken off On Mrs. Payson's uttering some expression of surprise, he replied—"I have not a very slight idea of the pain of amputation; yet I have no doubt that I suffer more every fifteen minutes than I should in having my leg taken off."

His youngest child, about a year old, had been under the care of a friend, and was to be removed a few miles out of town; but he expressed so strong a wish to see Charles first, that he was sent for. The look of love, and tenderness, and compassion with which he regarded the child, made an indelible impression on all present.

At his request some of the choir belonging to the congregation came a few days before his death, for the purpose of singing, for his gratification, some of the songs of Zion. He selected the one commencing, "Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings;" part of the hymn, "I'll praise my Maker with my breath;" and the "Dying Christian to his Soul."

Sabbath day, October 21, 1827, his last agony commenced. This holy man, who had habitually said of his racking pains, "These are God's arrows, but they are all sharpened with love"—and who in the extremity of suffering had been accustomed to repeat, as a favorite expression, "I will bless the Lord at *all times*'—had yet the "dying strife" to encounter. It commenced with the same difficulty of respiration, though in an aggravated degree, which had caused him great distress at intervals during his sickness. His daughter, who had gone to the Sabbath school without any apprehensions of so sudden a change, was called home. Though laboring for breath, and with a rattling in the throat similar to that which immediately precedes dissolution, he smiled upon her, kissed her affectionately, and said—"God bless you, my daughter!" Several of the church were soon collected at his bedside; he smiled on them all, but said little, as his power of utterance had nearly failed. Once he exclaimed, "Peace! peace! Victory! victory!" He looked on his wife and children, and said, almost in the words of dying Joseph to his brethren—words which he had before spoken of as having a peculiar sweetness, and which he now wished to recall to her mind—"I am going, but God will surely be with you." His friends watched him, expecting every moment to see him expire, till near noon, when his distress partially left him; and he said to the physician, who was feeling his pulse, that he found he was not to be released yet; and though he had suffered the pangs of death, and got almost within the gates of Paradise—yet, if it was God's will that he should come back and suffer still more, he was resigned. He passed through a similar scene in the afternoon, and, to the surprise of every one, was again relieved. The night following he suffered less than he had the two preceding. Friday night had been one of inexpressible suffering. That and the last night of his pilgrimage were the only nights in which he had watchers. The friend who attended him through his last night, read to him, at his request, the twelfth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians; parts of which must have been peculiarly applicable to his case.

On Monday morning his dying agonies returned in all their extremity. For three hours every breath was a groan. On being asked if his sufferings were greater than on the preceding Friday night, he answered, "Incomparably greater." He said that the greatest temporal blessing of which he could conceive would be one breath of air. Mrs. Payson fearing, from the expression of suffering in his countenance, that he was in mental as well as bodily anguish, questioned him on the subject. With extreme difficulty he was enabled to articulate the words, "Faith and patience hold out." About mid-day the pain of respiration abated, and a partial stupor succeeded. Still, however, he continued intelligent, and evidently able to recognise all who were present. His eyes spoke after his tongue became motionless. He looked on Mrs. Payson, and then his eye, glancing over the others who surrounded his bed, rested on Edward, his eldest son, with an expression which said—and which was interpreted by all present to say, as plainly as if he had uttered the words of the beloved disciple—"Behold thy mother!" There was no visible indication of the return of his sufferings. He gradually sunk away, till about the going down of the sun, when his happy spirit was set at liberty.

His "ruling passion was strong in death." His love for preaching was as invincible as that of the miser for gold, who dies grasping his treasure. Dr. Payson directed a label to be attached to his breast, on which should be written—"*Remember the words which I spake unto you while I was yet present with* *you;* that they might be read by all who came to look at his corpse, and by which he, being dead, still spake. The same words, at the request of his people, were engraven on the plate of the coffin, and read by thousands on the day of interment.

His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Charles Jenkins, (who was soon to follow him,) from 2 Tim. 4:6—8. "*I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*"

"BEHOLD THY MOTHER!"

The scene at the death-bed of Dr. Payson, described on the preceding page, has been happily expanded in the following beautiful lines from the pen of Mrs. Sigourney.

WHAT SAID THE EYE?—The marble lip spake not,
Save in that quivering sob with which stern Death
Doth crush life's harp-strings.—Lo! again it pours
A tide of more than utter'd eloquence—
"Son!—look upon thy mother!"—and retires
Beneath the curtain of the drooping lids,
To hide itself for ever. 'Tis the last,
Last glance!—and mark how tenderly it fell,

Upon that lov'd companion, and the groups
That wept around.—Full well the dying knew
The value of those holy charities
Which purge the dross of selfishness away,
And deep he felt that woman's trusting heart,
Rent from the cherish'd prop, which, next to Christ
Had been her stay in all adversities,
Would take the balm-cup best from that dear hand
Which woke the sources of maternal love—
That smile, whose winning paid for sleepless nights
Of cradle-care—that voice, whose murmur'd tones
Her own had moulded to the words of prayer!
How soothing to a widow'd mother's breast
Her first-born's sympathy!
Be strong, young man!
Lift the protector's arm—the healer's prayer
Be tender in thy every word and deed.
A Spirit watcheth thee!—Yes, he who pass'd
From shaded earth up to the full-orb'd day,
Will be thy witness in the court of heaven
How thou dost bear his mantle.
So farewell,
Leader in Israel!—Thou whose radiant path
Was like the angel's standing in the sun,*
Undazzled and unswerving—it was meet
That thou shouldst rise to light without a cloud.

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* Revelation, 19:17.

THE END.

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